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# Welcome

**Now it's official: plants are good for us.** A new study by scientists in Florida* confirms what I think everyone reading this knows – that being around plants makes us feel better, while gardening helps **reduce anxiety** and boost our wellbeing.

Why are plants so powerful for us? Researchers believe that because we've come to rely on them through evolution, for food and shelter, our connections run deep. Today, plants are every gardener's source of joy, giving back in **happiness and optimism** far more than any inconvenience from the odd failure or bad weather.

Being part of plants' growth connects us even more – and this month is the perfect time to dive in. As we leave behind the languid days of August, our gardens are ready for us again, with warm soil and good light, while the changing season propels us forward.

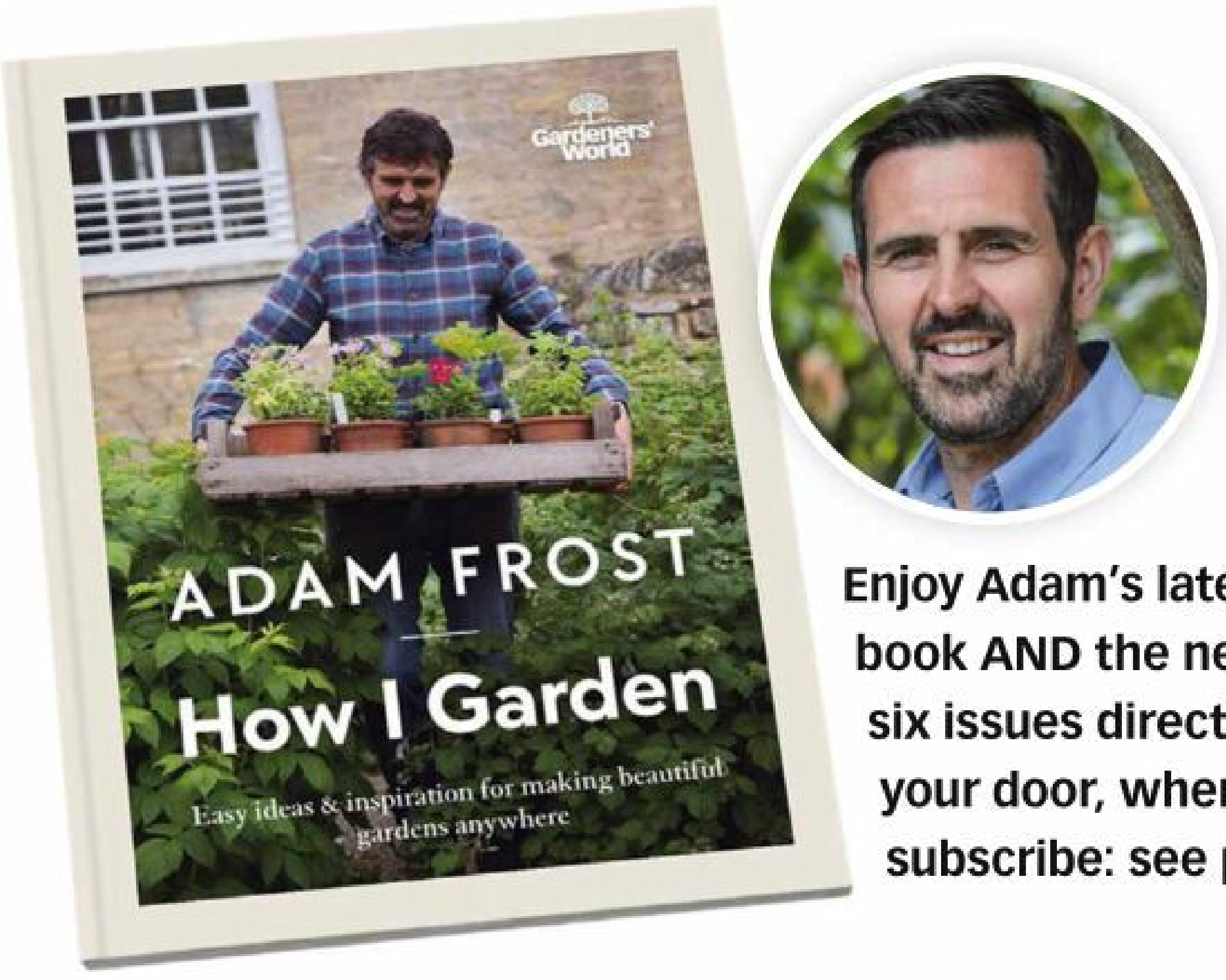
So where should you start? We're putting flowers first in this issue, and reckon a cutting patch and bulbs should be top of everyone's **September wishlist** – so, in this issue, we show how to get results. Growing now from seed or multi-packs of dried bulbs is a savvy way to keeps costs down, too, rather than buying bigger next spring.

And on that theme, don't miss our guide to veg growing on a budget, from page 112. You really can make a difference to your shopping bills, and the food miles that come from our reliance on supermarkets, while the pleasure of **growing your own** is priceless.

So enjoy the issue – and don't forget to share with us the moments that bring you most joy in your garden this month.

Lucy

**Lucy Hall, Editor**
@lucyhall_GW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***Looking to get in touch? Turn to page 154***

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*UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, JULY 2022. BIT.LY/WELLBEING-GARDENS

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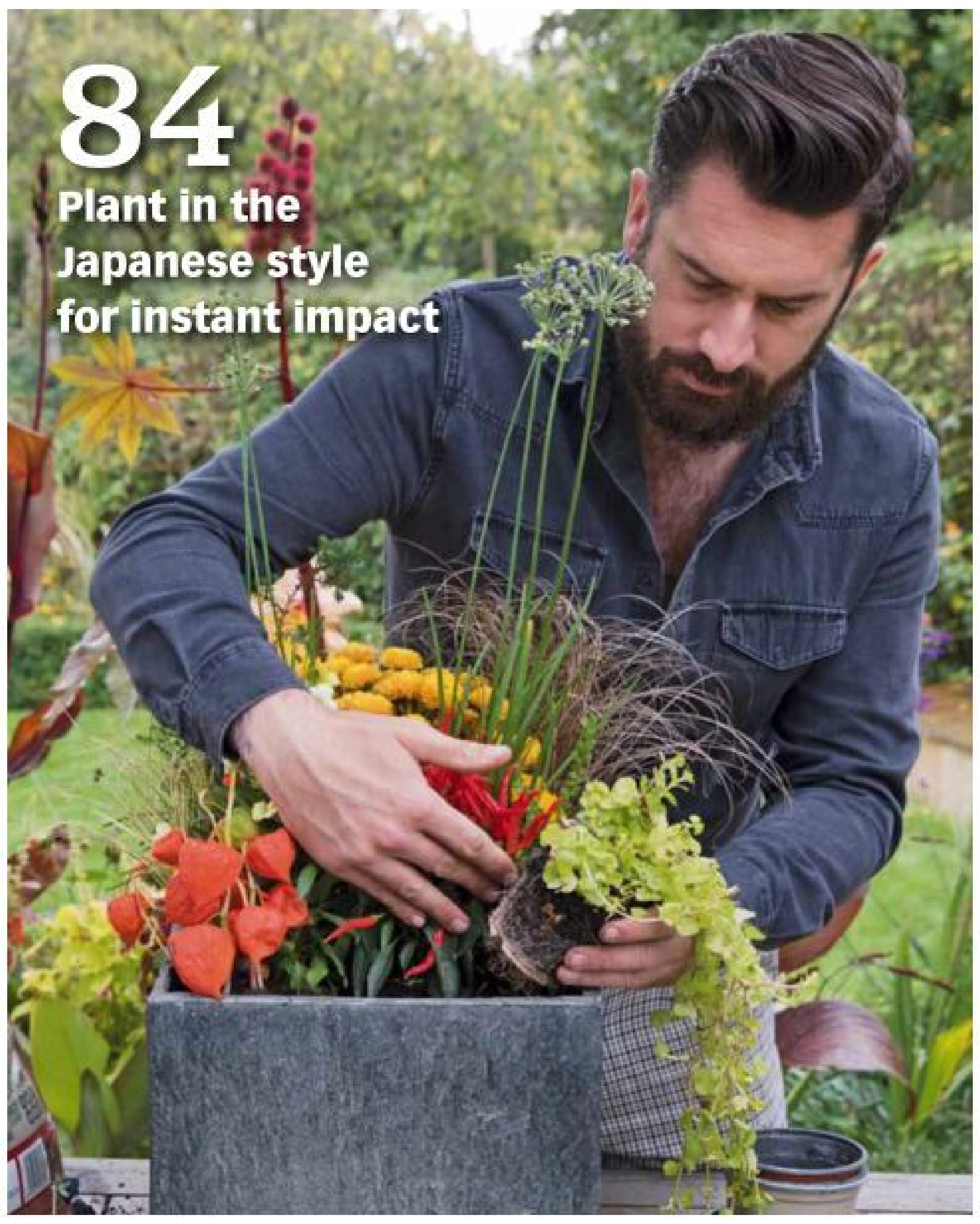
***Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Xanthos' in a cut-flower display by Louise Curley. Photo by Jason Ingram**



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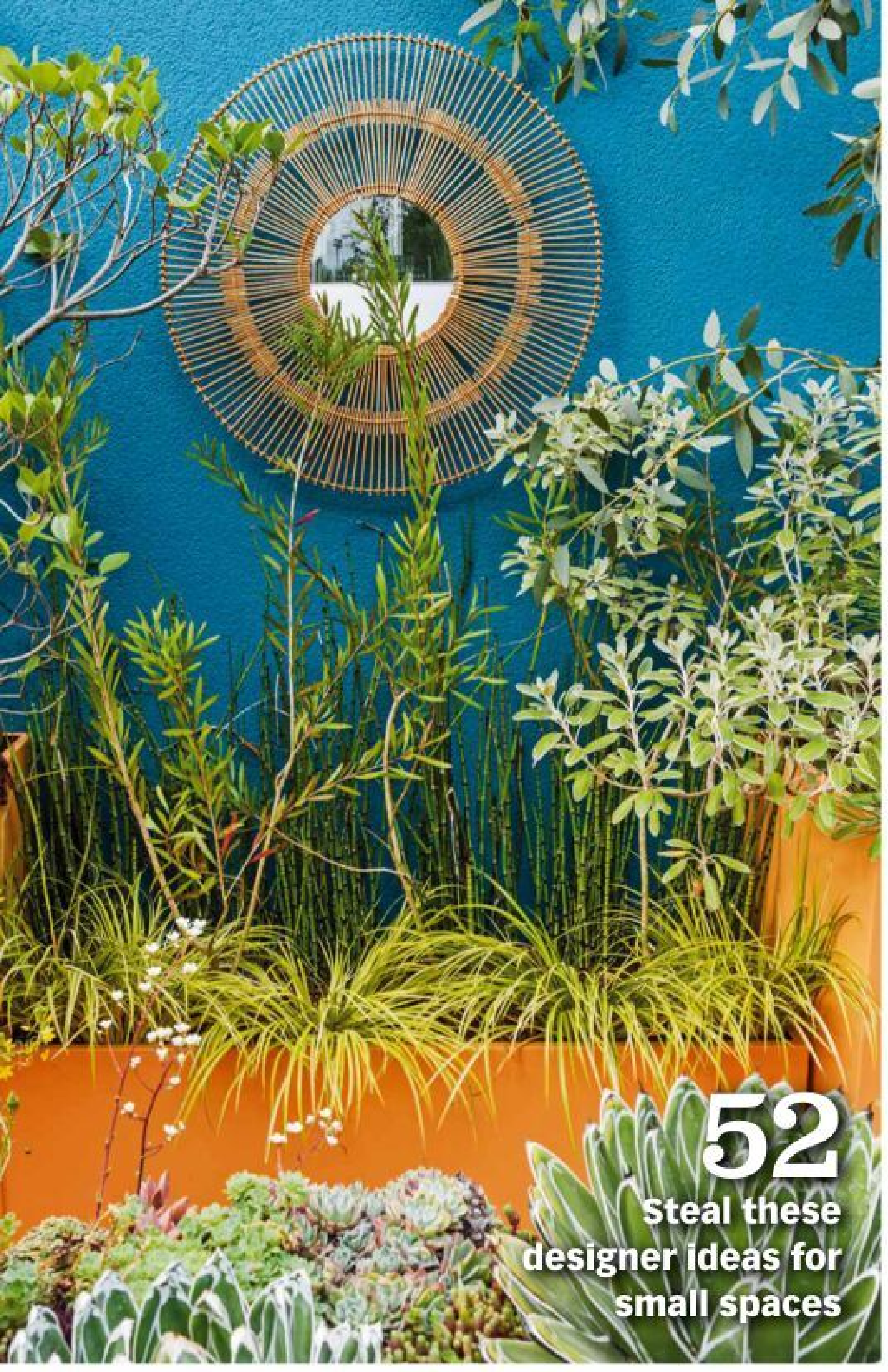

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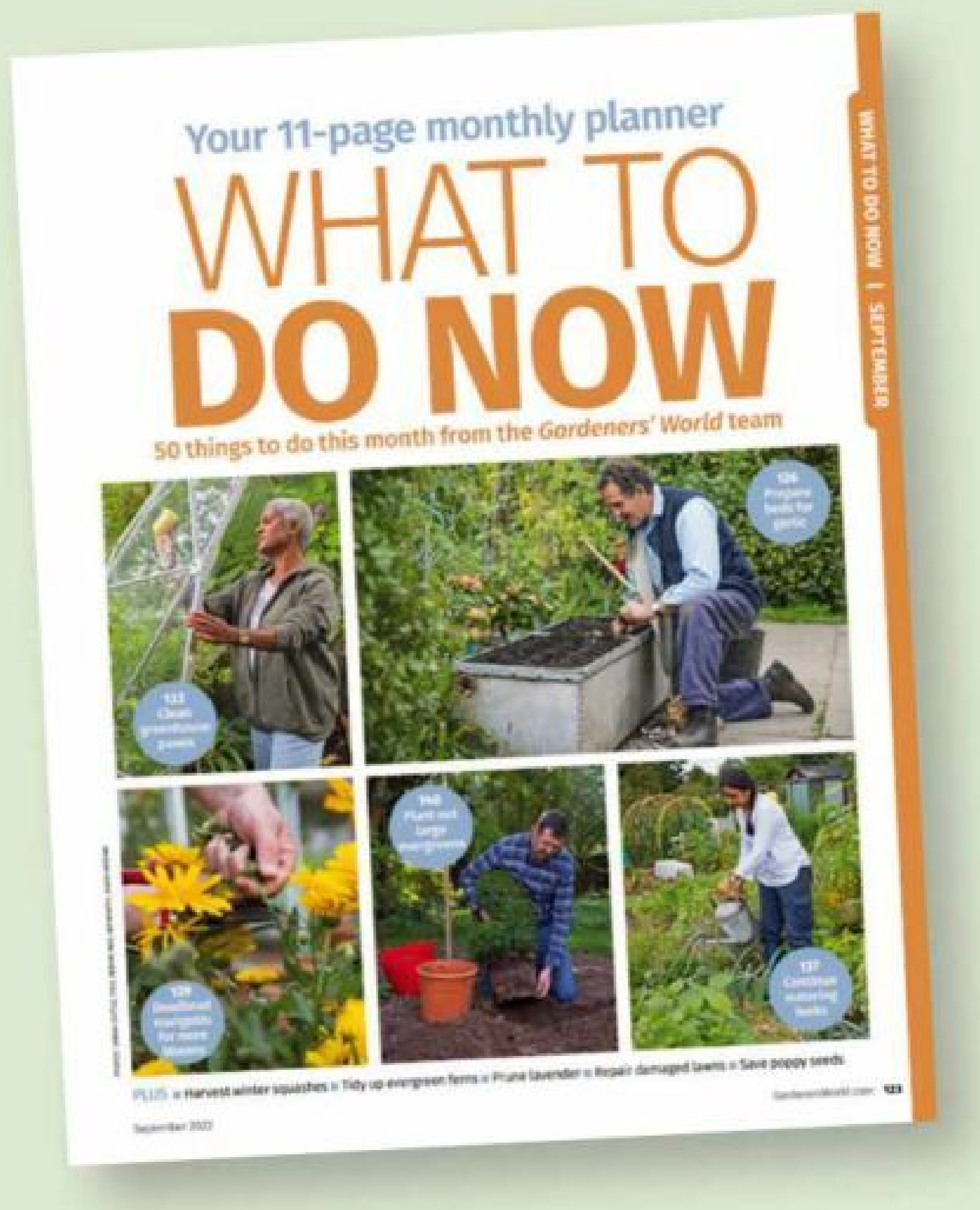

Your 11-page monthly planner
WHAT TO DO NOW
50 things to do this month from the Gardeners' World team

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Follow Alan's easy guide to healthy, beautiful containers

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*“Happily we bask in this warm September sun, which illuminates all creatures”*

*Henry David Thoreau*

# We love September

**I may have said this before,** but I love this month: it is an almost perfect mixture of hullos and farewells. New school shoes and crisply clean uniforms for children, a new day back at work after a hot summer holiday, and a new mellowness in the air after a couple of months of heat (I am nothing if not an optimist). At the same time the plants in our borders that have given us such pleasure over the summer are beginning to fade away to make room for the last harrumph of flowers before we drift into a glorious autumn.

**WORDS** JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR

## STAR OF THE MONTH

*Thalictrum delavayi* 'Hewitts Double'

The thalictrums bracket the summer. There are varieties (like the sensationally saucy *T.* 'Black Stockings' and the unutterably lofty *T.* 'Elin') that do their thing in June or July, and then there are these as the summer fades. And thank goodness for that, as they are a complete delight. Little nodding heads held on stems as fine and delicate as a gnat's fibula. It is a plant that brings a welcome lightness to a border – as you can see here, where it is posing with a hydrangea. It works equally well with the blue veronica and that perky pink anemone.

Divide clumps in spring. May need a stake for support in windy sites. Can cause a rash to sensitive skin – wear gloves. **Height x Spread** 1.5m x 50cm

PHOTO: JASON INGRAM

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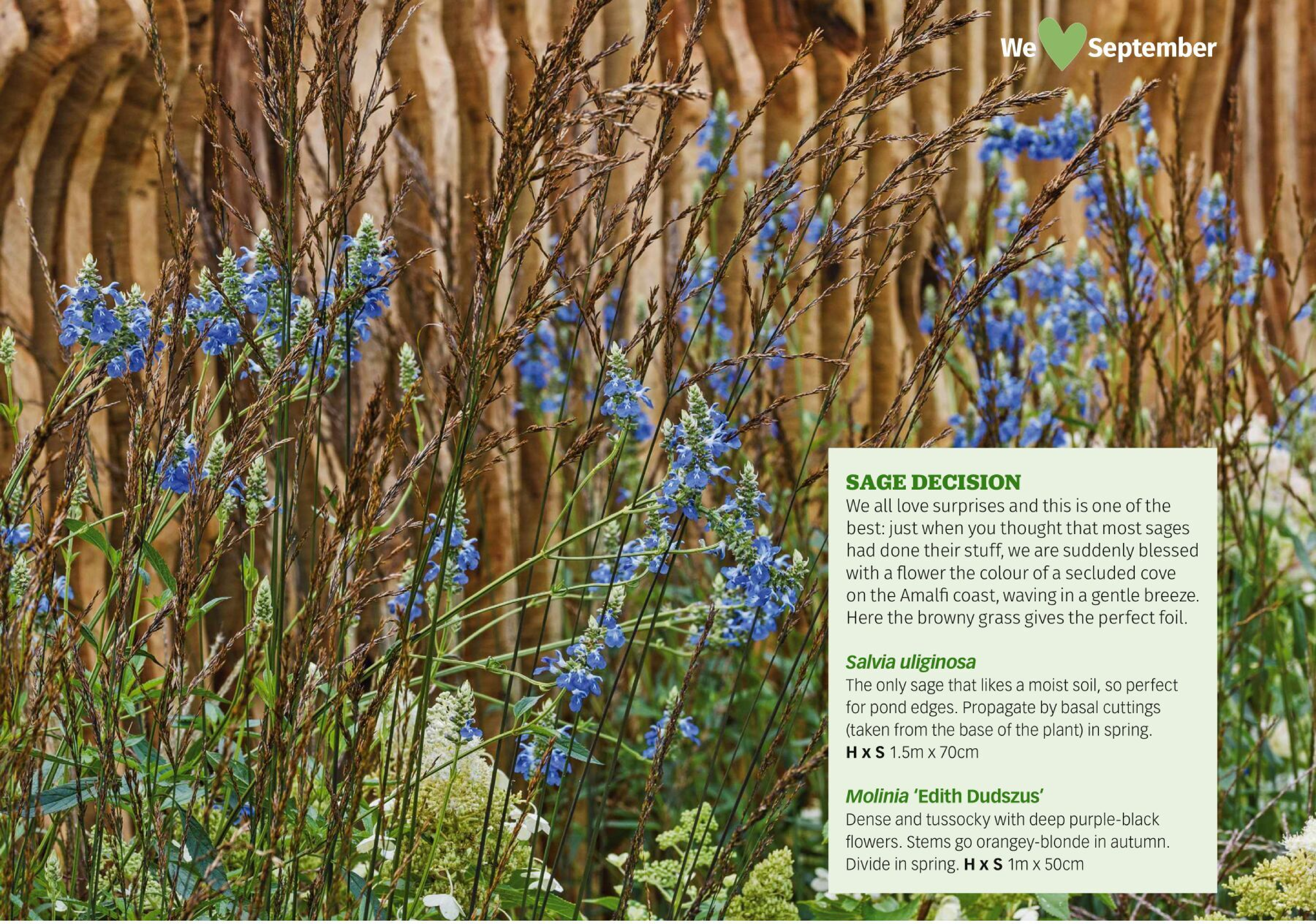


## SAGE DECISION

We all love surprises and this is one of the best: just when you thought that most sages had done their stuff, we are suddenly blessed with a flower the colour of a secluded cove on the Amalfi coast, waving in a gentle breeze. Here the browny grass gives the perfect foil.

### *Salvia uliginosa*

The only sage that likes a moist soil, so perfect for pond edges. Propagate by basal cuttings (taken from the base of the plant) in spring. **H x S** 1.5m x 70cm

### *Molinia* 'Edith Dudszus'

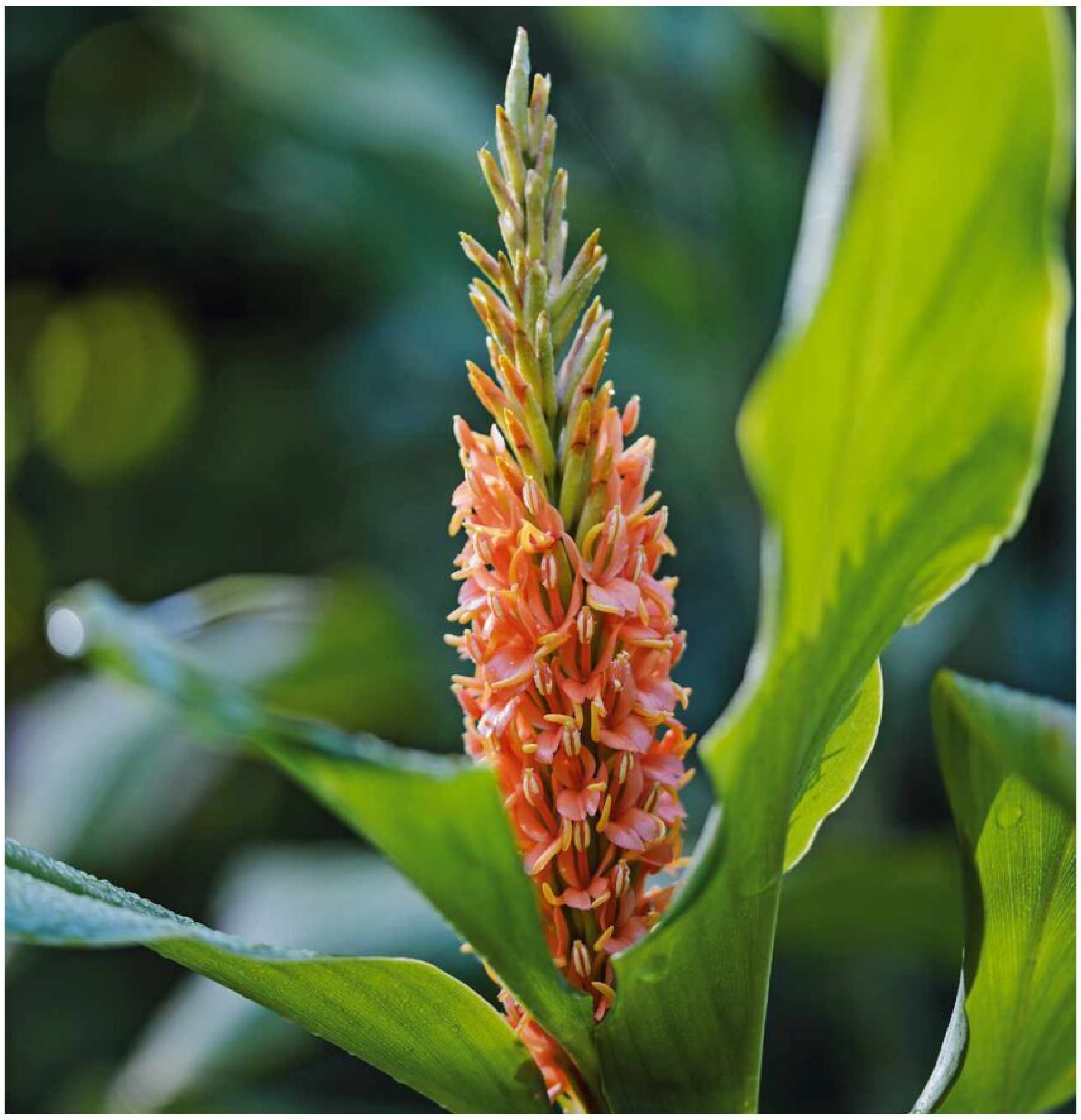
Dense and tussocky with deep purple-black flowers. Stems go orangey-blonde in autumn. Divide in spring. **H x S** 1m x 50cm

## PROCEED GINGERLY

Often gardens have a peak of loveliness in June and then tend to peter out a little. One way to avoid this is to have a garden that gently edges towards the more exotic as the summer progresses. The roses and cottagey plants are mostly over, so there is space for some big tropical leaves and some tight, bright colours. With this ginger you get both: leaves like flags and sensational orange flowers.

### *Hedychium* 'Assam Orange'

Divide the rhizomes (gnarly roots) in the springtime to make more plants. Protect from cold winds and mulch thickly to protect them through winter. **H x S** 3m x 1m



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## STEM THE FLOW

With a bit of clever pruning this makes a sensational tree for the smaller garden or, if left to its own devices, will form a good-looking shrub. Great clusters of white flowers and very distinctive folded leaves. Works well as the centrepiece to a flurry of late-summer colour.

### *Heptacodium miconioides*

Scented flowers with interesting sepals that remain once petals have fallen. Good bark. Take cuttings in spring or summer.
**H x S** 6m x 4m

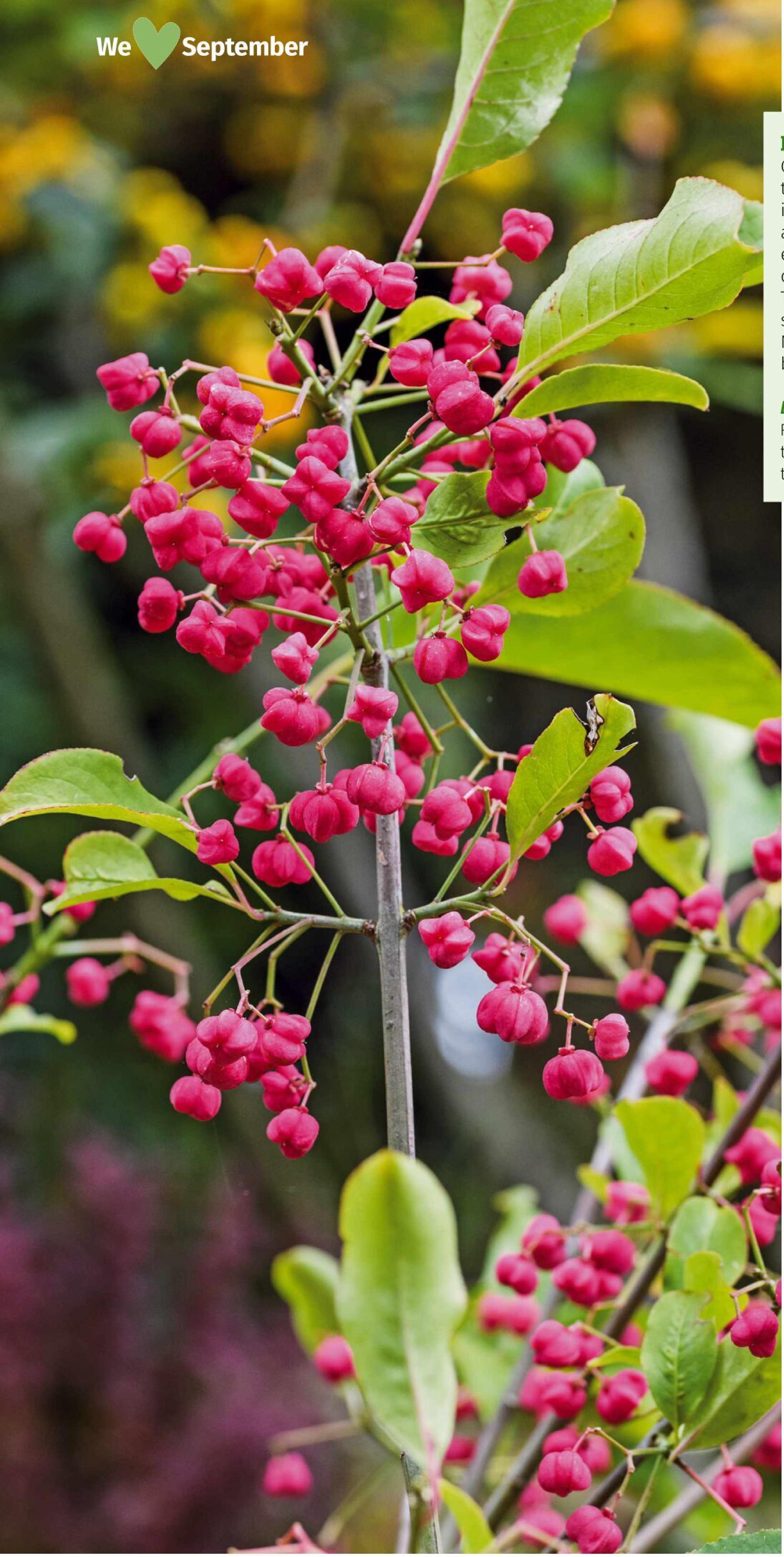
### *Verbena bonariensis*

One of those plants that every garden should embrace – especially newly planted gardens. Goes with everything. Likes lots of sun.
**H x S** 1.6m x 40cm

### *Eurybia x herveyi*

Used to be known as an aster. Loads of daisy-shaped flowers. Spreads easily when happy. Divide in spring. **H x S** 70cm x 50cm

PHOTO: JASON INGRAM

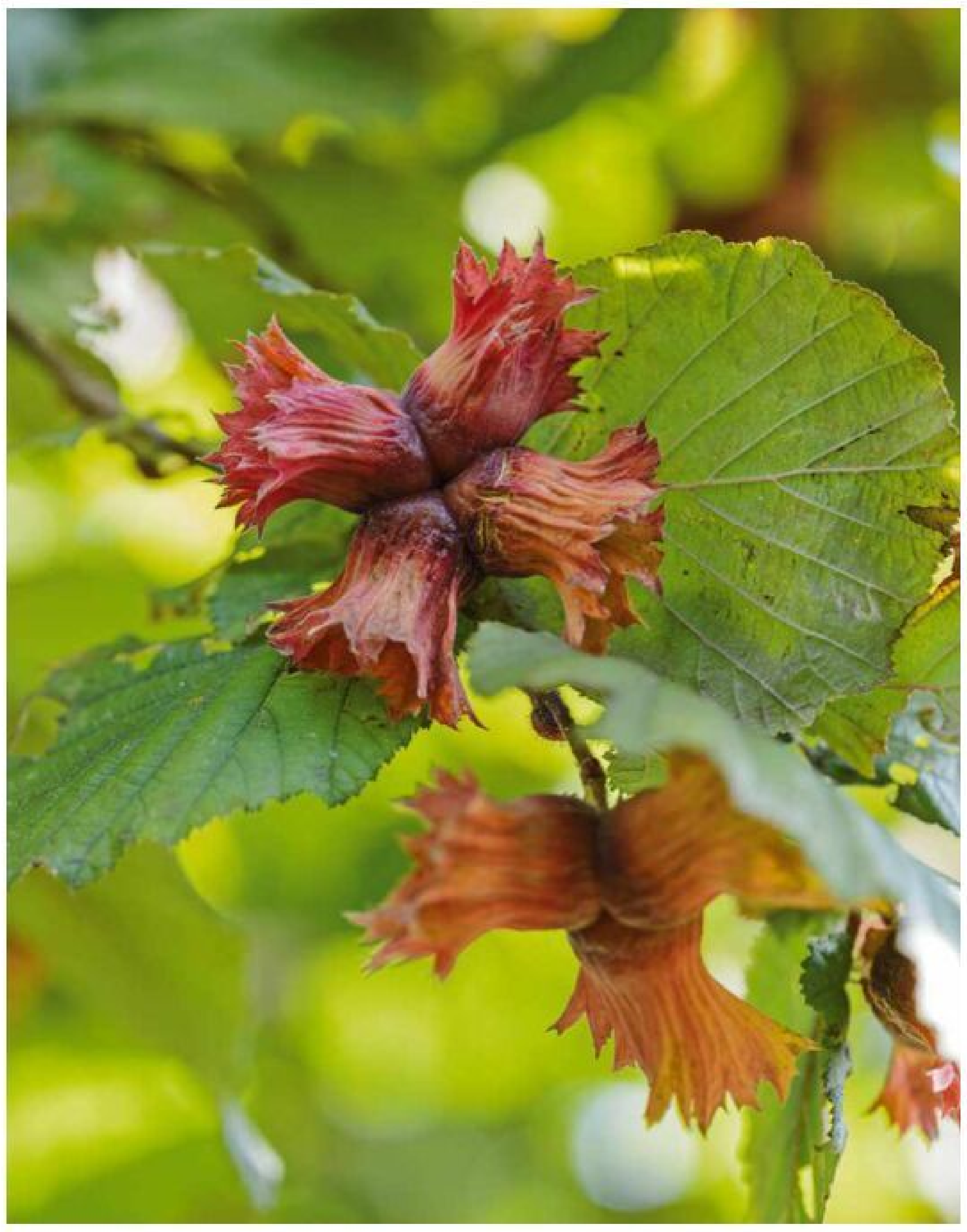


## KICKING UP A PINK

One of my very favourite shrubs. This is the European spindle, which provides an invaluable part of many native field hedges, along with hawthorn, viburnum, dogwood etc. Unlike the rest, this waits until the end of summer to pull off its snazziest trick. Those red fruits in the picture are about to split open to reveal gorgeous orange seeds. Not only that, but it has leaves that turn beautifully. A real autumn treat.

***Euonymus europaeus***

Propagate by summer cuttings or by collecting the seed. Only needs a light pruning if it gets too big. **H x S** 3m x 3m



## SQUIRREL THESE AWAY

Growing hazel for nuts is an act of supreme optimism because you are not the only one thinking about a hazelnut meringue or even a jar of home-made Nutella. The squirrels are waiting patiently and one of the annoying things about squirrels is that they will always beat you in a nut race! You might get some if you are very lucky, but at least you can enjoy the foliage.

***Corylus avellana***

A stalwart native shrub (or tree if you let it). Good leaves, great flowers and a fantastic source of plant supports when coppiced. **H x S** 5m x 5m

PHOTOS: PAUL DEBOIS; JASON INGRAM

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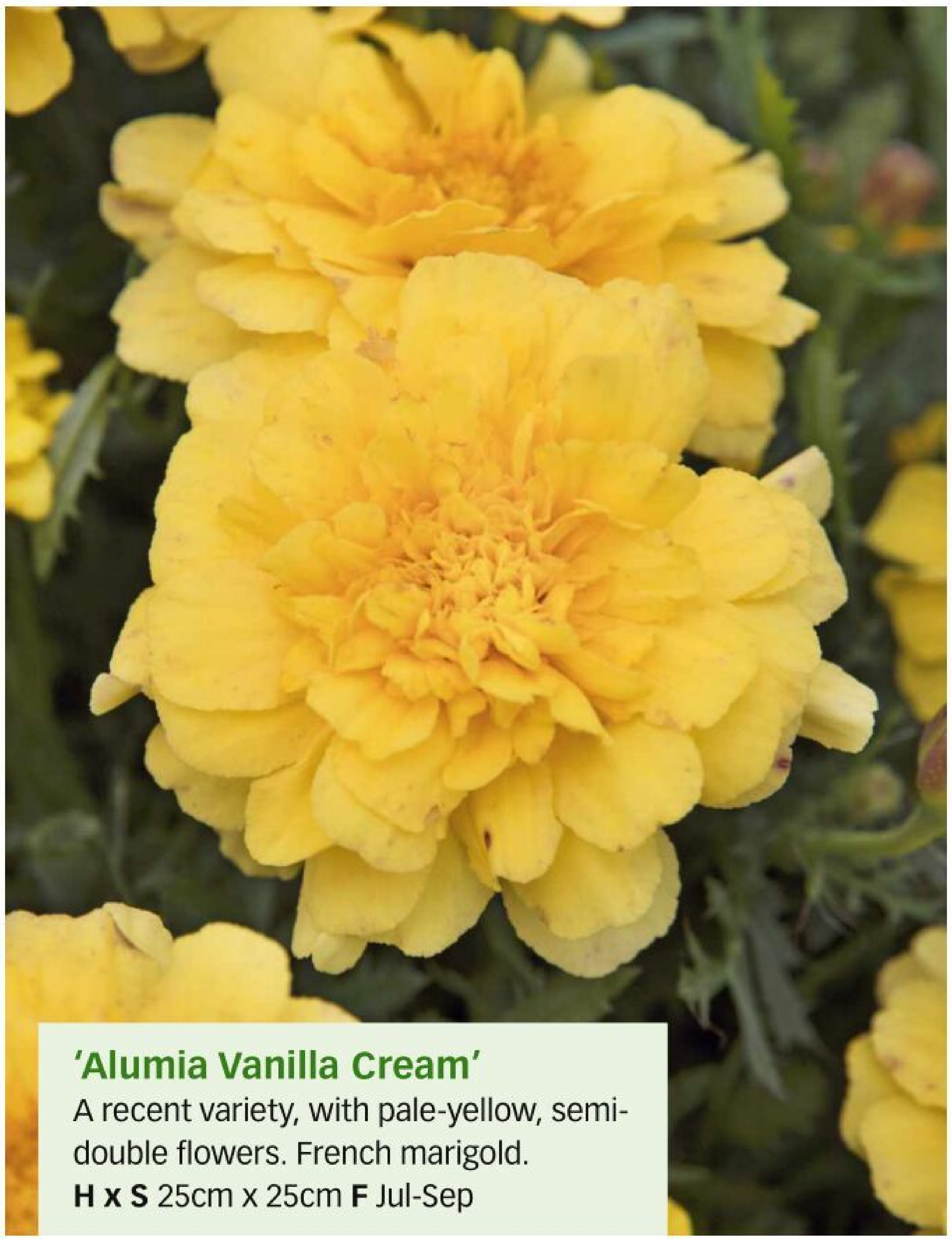
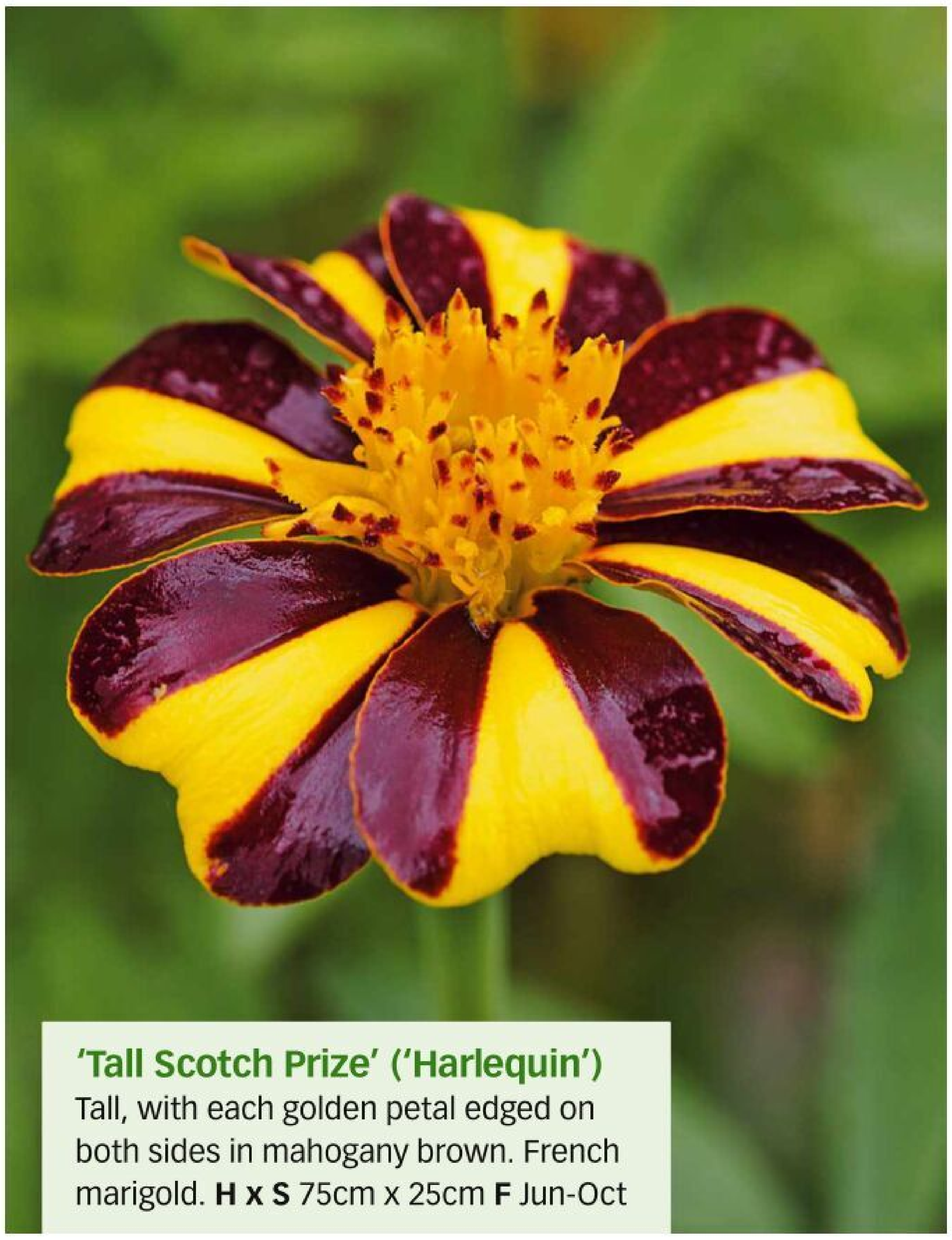
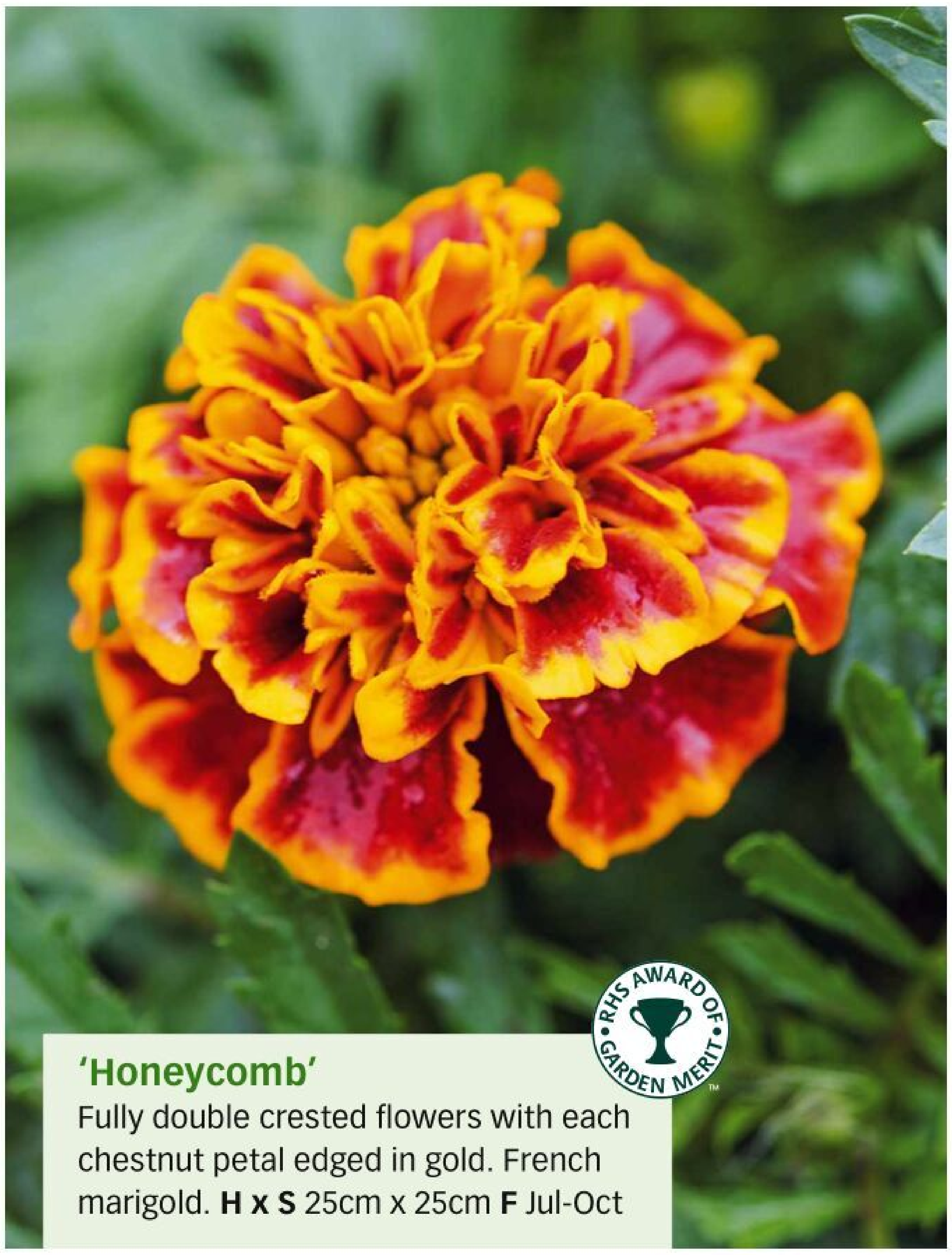


**'Alumia Vanilla Cream'**
A recent variety, with pale-yellow, semi-double flowers. French marigold.
**H x S** 25cm x 25cm **F** Jul-Sep



**'Tall Scotch Prize' ('Harlequin')**
Tall, with each golden petal edged on both sides in mahogany brown. French marigold. **H x S** 75cm x 25cm **F** Jun-Oct



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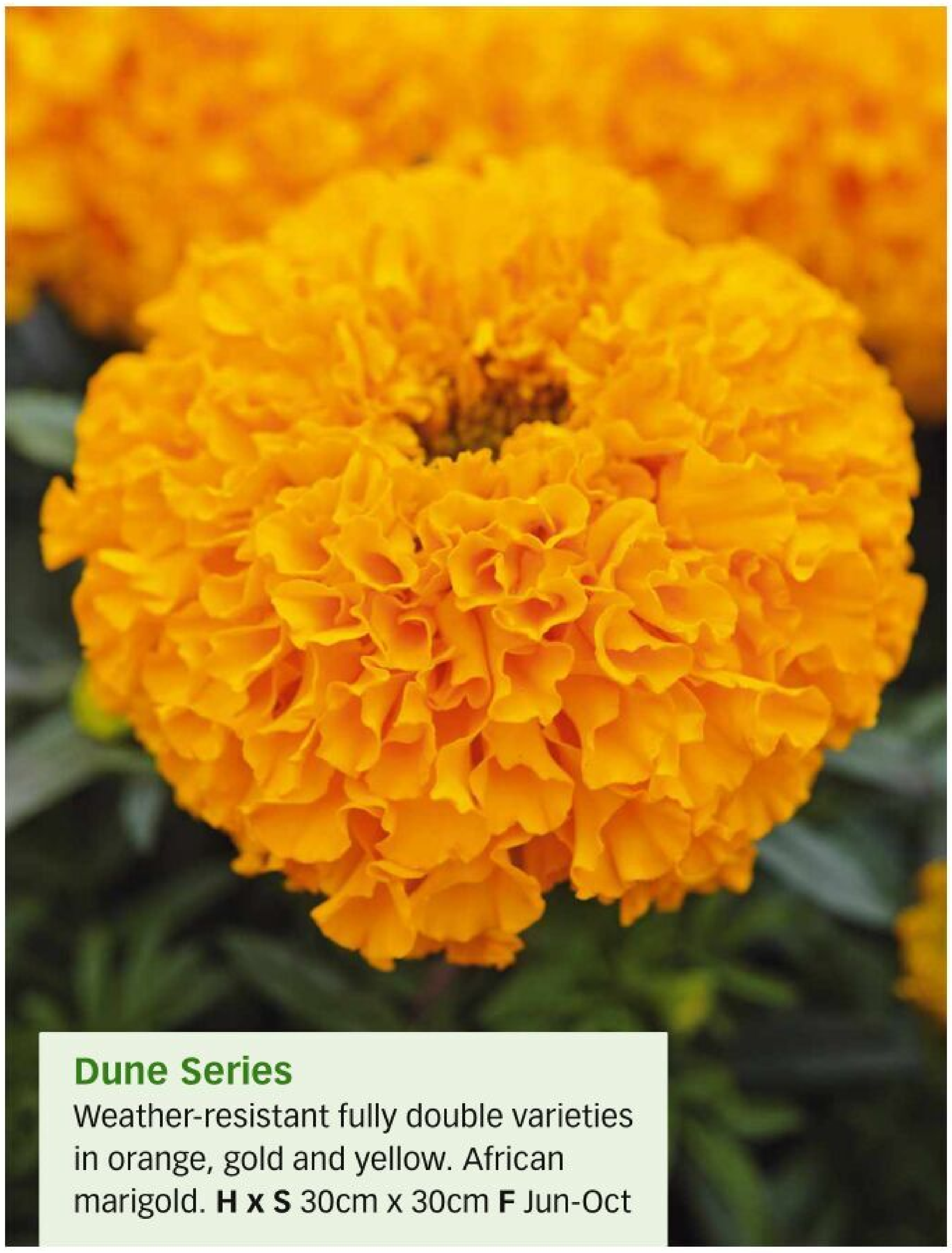
**'Honeycomb'**
Fully double crested flowers with each chestnut petal edged in gold. French marigold. **H x S** 25cm x 25cm **F** Jul-Oct



**Dune Series**
Weather-resistant fully double varieties in orange, gold and yellow. African marigold. **H x S** 30cm x 30cm **F** Jun-Oct

## Tagetes

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sow seed (indoors)** | | | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | | | | | | |
| **Flowering** | | | | | | 🟪 | 🟪 | 🟪 | 🟪 | | | |

PHOTOS: JASON INGRAM; SARAH CUTTLE ; THOMPSON & MORGAN

**'Lemon Gem'**
Small bright-yellow flowers produced in great profusion on rounded plants. Tagetes. **H x S** 25cm x 25cm **F** Jun-Oct

# Expert's choice

## Tagetes

Easy to grow, these provide colour well into autumn, says **Graham Rice**

**Years ago I wrote a book about annuals and** I started the chapter on tagetes with the definitive phrase: "I hate marigolds!" I then went on to make fun of African marigolds in particular, about why I didn't like them ("dish mops dipped in paint", that sort of thing). But, frankly, it was all a little bit snobby! These days I'm much more: "If you like it, grow it – and take no notice of a bloke writing in a magazine".

So, let's hear it for marigolds! One thing we cannot deny about marigolds is that they're colourful. The problem with some, African marigolds in particular, is that while they bring us colour, it's not always matched with elegance, although the recent arrival from India of the tall varieties used in Asian weddings is changing all that. The smaller flowered French marigolds can be inelegant in a different way. Some are just too dumpy and squat, but the old Victorian striped marigolds such as 'Tall Scotch Prize' are among the most valuable of annuals for borders and cutting. French types also now come in intriguing new colours. Then there's the dainty and confusingly named 'tagetes' – lacily bushy plants with small single flowers and sweetly aromatic foliage, like 'Lemon Gem'. These are ideal in fiery containers.

I've gone from "hate them all" to "love some of them". Perhaps you have it in your heart to forgive and forget, and grow a few next summer.

- **Position** All enjoy full sun and fertile free-draining soil. Many will also do well when shaded from the side (though not when shaded from overhead). Most thrive in containers.
- **Care** These are frost-tender, half-hardy annuals to sow in spring in a propagator and grow on in the greenhouse or propagator for planting after the last frost. Regular deadheading is important to keep the plants looking good and to keep the flowers coming, although this is far easier with African marigolds than with 'tagetes' types.
- **Where to buy** nickys-nursery.co.uk, 01843 600972; plantsofdistinction.co.uk, 01449 721720; thompson-morgan.com, 0333 400 0033

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/grow-tagetes** for more tips for success with tagetes

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**Flowers** Jun

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**H x S** Varied **F** May-Jul

5 plants **£15**

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■ ***Loropetalum* 'Ruby Snow'**

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**H x S** 60cm x 80cm **F** Feb-Apr

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■ ***Helleborus* x *hybridus* Mix**

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**H x S** 35cm x 35cm **F** Feb-Apr

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# The Full Monty

Society has changed enormously since *Gardeners' World* first aired in 1968. So, asks **Monty**, is there still such as thing as a 'typical' viewer?

PHOTO: MARSHA ARNOLD

**This July, when being interviewed on** stage at the Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, I was asked "Who is *Gardeners' World* for?". It was an interesting question, partly because, in a thousand previous interviews, I had never been asked it before; and partly because it is one that I, and everyone involved in the production team, constantly ask.

Gardening is changing. I would argue that this is inevitable and perfectly natural but it is more than that. For varied reasons, we are becoming a society that my parents – both born over 100 years ago – would barely recognise. I believe that most of these changes are a good thing, but I know adapting to change is demanding and disturbing. This means that for many, *Gardeners' World* is a sanctuary of decency and normality, where they can retreat and feel safe from the disturbing strangeness of modern life. That is pretty much how I feel about my garden. It is, amongst other things, my 'safe place'.

But if you try, on television, to show only that, then two things happen. The first is the risk that 'safety' becomes cloyingly saccharine and you slip into a cosy nostalgia of a world that actually never existed. The second is that you make yourself irrelevant to a huge number of people that have grown up in this modern world.

> *"For gardening to work at all, it has to take all sorts – and celebrate that fact"*

My children and their friends, born between 1985 and 1990, have never heard, for example, of Geoff Hamilton, let alone Percy Thrower. None of them has ever considered watching *Gardeners' World* of their own volition until very, very recently, and when they finally do so, they are slightly embarrassed to admit it.

These are not children or even what might be called Young People. Many will be 40 in a couple of years' time and the youngest will never see 30 again. They have established partners, are parents, have mortgages, some are balding, putting on a little weight, noticing a few aches and pains. Is *Gardeners' World* for them?

There is another raft of grown-ups – a little younger, perhaps leaving college, getting jobs and trying to work out how they will ever afford a house. They are bright, hard-working and deeply engaged with the natural world, environmental issues and the planet that they are inheriting. What, if anything, is *Gardeners' World* to them?

It used to be often said that gardening was something you came to in the fullness of time. That it was part of the package of getting your first home, settling down and – as an unsaid subtext – becoming a mature adult. But that won't wash any more – if it ever did. There is a generation that may never get their own home, that may never 'settle down' but yet love growing things and love this physical world every bit as much as the owner of a proudly maintained garden. For gardening to work at all, it has to take all sorts – and celebrate that fact.

So, who do I think that I am talking to when I address the camera each week on *Gardeners' World*? When I began presenting gardening programmes 35 years ago, it was my wife's Aunty Mary. But not any more.

There is a small but vociferous part of the audience who see *Gardeners' World* as a chance to both tick the boxes of their own horticultural knowledge and to loudly disapprove if anything is shown or done in a way that differs from their own. We used to be self-conscious about placating this 'gardening mafia', but not any more. They are welcome, but *Gardeners' World* is not aimed exclusively at or for them.

I think the answer is that *Gardeners' World* obviously has to be entertaining and informative for anyone and everyone who has access to a garden of any kind – or indeed, who just loves plants and green spaces.

I am a 67-year-old grandfather and I am comfortable with all the preconceptions and expectations of those of us of a similar age. But, increasingly, I see it as my own mission to inspire and encourage those starting out on the rich experience of making a garden or growing things – any thing, any where. It does not matter how old or young you are. If *Gardeners' World* can help shape, inspire and inform your future – rather than shoring up your past – then we are hitting the right mark.

Monty

**MONTY ON TV** Catch Monty and the rest of the *Gardeners' World* team at 8pm every Friday evening in September. And listen to the new podcast with him discussing the making of Longmeadow at **GardenersWorld.com/podcast**

# Have your say

The view from your side of the fence

HOT TOPIC

## Family fun

I recently had great fun following the tips from the *Family Gardening Special* (July issue) with my own family. We are new to gardening and are now subscribers to your magazine. The children loved getting involved in our new garden and making your bird feeders!

**David Lyon, by email**

**Madden, 2, and Harper, 7, hope the birds also like their homemade bird feeders**

I love my garden and spend a lot of time in it. I have a long side border with lots of perennials and annuals, with filled pots all around and plenty of colour. My lawn is fairly long and a great place for my grandchildren to play football, badminton, chase etc. Therefore, it's always patchy and scuffed, and my flowers are regularly deadheaded by footballs, usually followed by an "Oops, sorry Nan!" But it's a family garden – the plants survive and regrow their flowers, and the lawn is still there.

I know that in a few years, when the football stops, I may get that perfect lawn, but I think I'll miss those patches! Gardens are a perfect place for families after all.

**Pam Gittins, by email**

### Trial and error

I love my garden and *Gardeners' World*, in fact, I love anything to do with gardens! Like a lot of people, I am enjoying succulents and the variety available is amazing. I had a very leggy aeonium that I decided to propagate by removing a flowerhead and inserting it into free-draining compost – to my delight I now have a very sturdy plant! The bonus is that the remaining stalk I'd left in the original pot and placed outside, has become a rejuvenated plant full of new plant heads! Trial and error sometimes gives unexpected results.

**Anne Bridge, Merseyside**

### Going bananas in Surrey

I've had my banana tree for about eight years and every winter I drag it back into the garage in its pot. Last year it got too big so I left it out over winter wrapped in some hessian. To my surprise, this summer it produced a small pod of bananas. I'm not sure if this is mere luck or the result of the hot weather we've been experiencing lately in this part of the country.

**Adam Nelhams, Surrey**

***WE SAY:** Usually bananas have to be in a heated greenhouse to fruit. Have you seen other unusual flowering or fruiting this year?*

### Making a meal of it

Thanks for the carrot seeds that came with my magazine's February subscriber issue. We've only got a small garden so we had to sprinkle the seeds in a tub filled with a general purpose compost. Recently, we needed a vegetable to go with our dinner and my husband pulled out four carrots. Thank you, *Gardeners' World*!

**Gill Gleeson, by email**

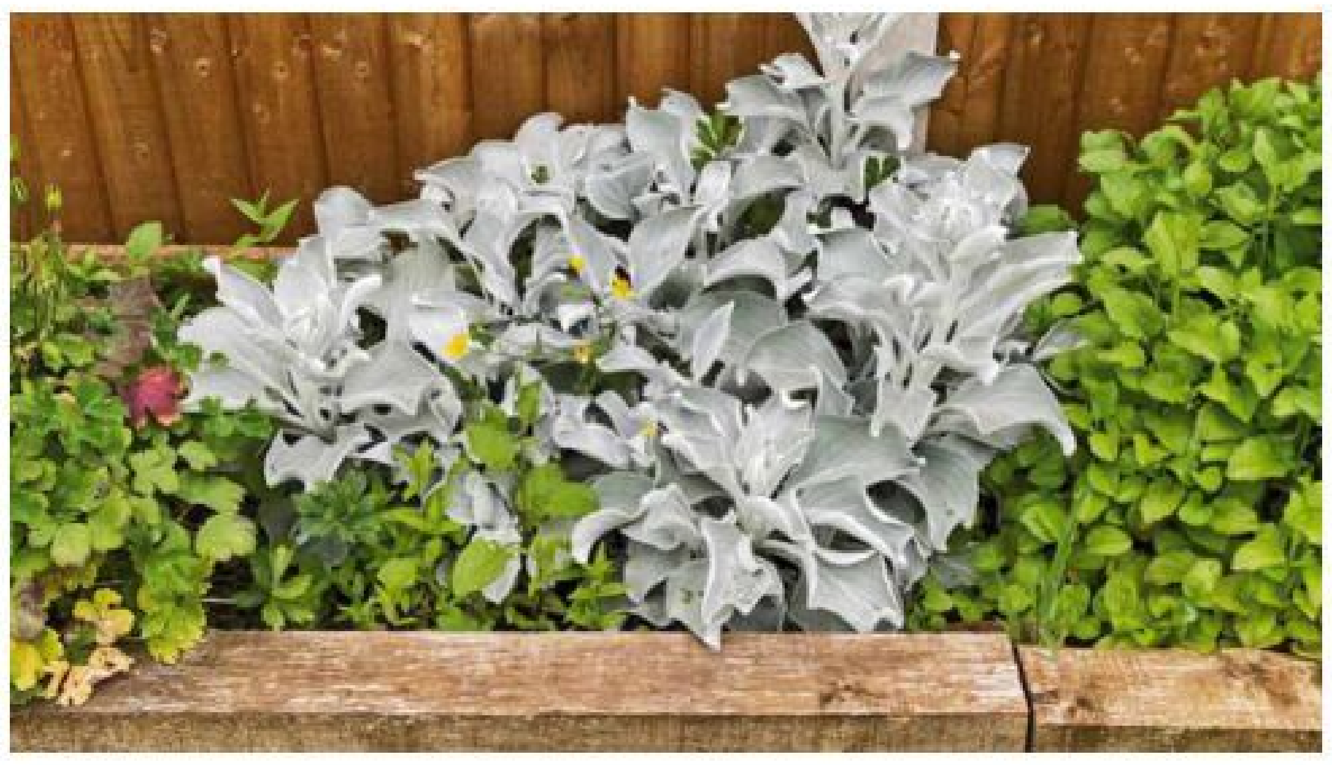
**Gill devoured the results of her free seeds**

### Where angels tread without fear

I am very proud of the four Angel Wings I have in my garden, below. They appear to like the soil and the TLC that they receive. Three were bought when they were the size of a dinner plate and the fourth one is courtesy of birds!

Also, I read with interest an article on slugs, and I can confirm that they definitely like ale! I go 'slugging' on a Sunday, and I regularly find between 10 and 20 slugs in the ale traps that I set. I think this contributes to why the plants look so healthy and are forming new leaves.

**Anne Steel, by email**



**Anne's Angel Wings are healthy, thanks to ale**

## Write to us at

*Have your say,* Gardeners' World Magazine*, Vineyard House, 44 Brook Green, London W6 7BT or email letters@gardenersworld.com and you could win a prize. Letters or emails submitted may be edited for publication. Prizes sent to UK addresses only.*

**ACROSS 1** Annuals **7** Apples **8** Tom West **9** Isabel **10** Roses **11** Painted **12** Crambe **15** Anemone **18** Agaric **19** Graft **21** Bluebell **22** Elata

**DOWN 1** Aster **2** Nemesia **3** Acers **4** Sativa **5** Sphagnum **6** Mezereon **11** Peaches **13** Regale **14** Marvel **16** Eagle **17** Ovata **20** Tea

Like many creatures, Ole can't resist Russell's raspberries

## A delicious dog's dinner

Each year I compete with various raspberry thieves: pigeons, blackbirds and sparrows. However, this year there is a far hungrier, voracious and totally huggable pest – my pet cocker spaniel, Ole. Here he is caught in the act chewing his way through yet another ripe berry.

**Russell Crocker, by email**

## California dreaming

I'm quite obsessed with *Gardeners' World* and I even watch old episodes just to fill my need to watch your programme! However, as I live in the high desert in Los Angeles County in California, USA, a lot of the tips can't be applied. Our weather is very extreme with scorching hot, dry summers and cold, windy winters, and the soil is very sandy. I'd like some advice on growing in these conditions, especially with watering. Plants that say 'full sun' often can't handle our full sun. I also don't want to just grow typical desert plants such as cacti and succulents. I mainly have to grow in containers but would like to grow more in the ground as well. Has Monty ever thought of doing a gardening tour of the USA?

**Erin Shannon, California**

***We say:*** *Monty has indeed toured the USA – the* Monty Don's American Gardens *DVD is available from Amazon.*

### This month's prizes

Each winner will receive two ***Gardeners' World Guide*** 132-page special editions worth £16.98, delivered to their home.

Our *Grow Your Own* Guide also includes 5 packets of veg seeds worth £11.65. For more details about the Guide Series, go to **bit.ly/GWGBUN21**

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# Clippings

Our roundup of the month's latest gardening news and views

## Trees 'will survive' ash dieback devastation

Ten years on from the discovery of the first confirmed case of ash dieback in the UK, the hunt is still on for trees with natural immunity.Ash dieback, caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, has spread to almost every area of the UK since it was first identified in 2012. Hundreds of thousands of ash trees have died: last year alone, the National Trust felled over 30,000 affected ash trees.

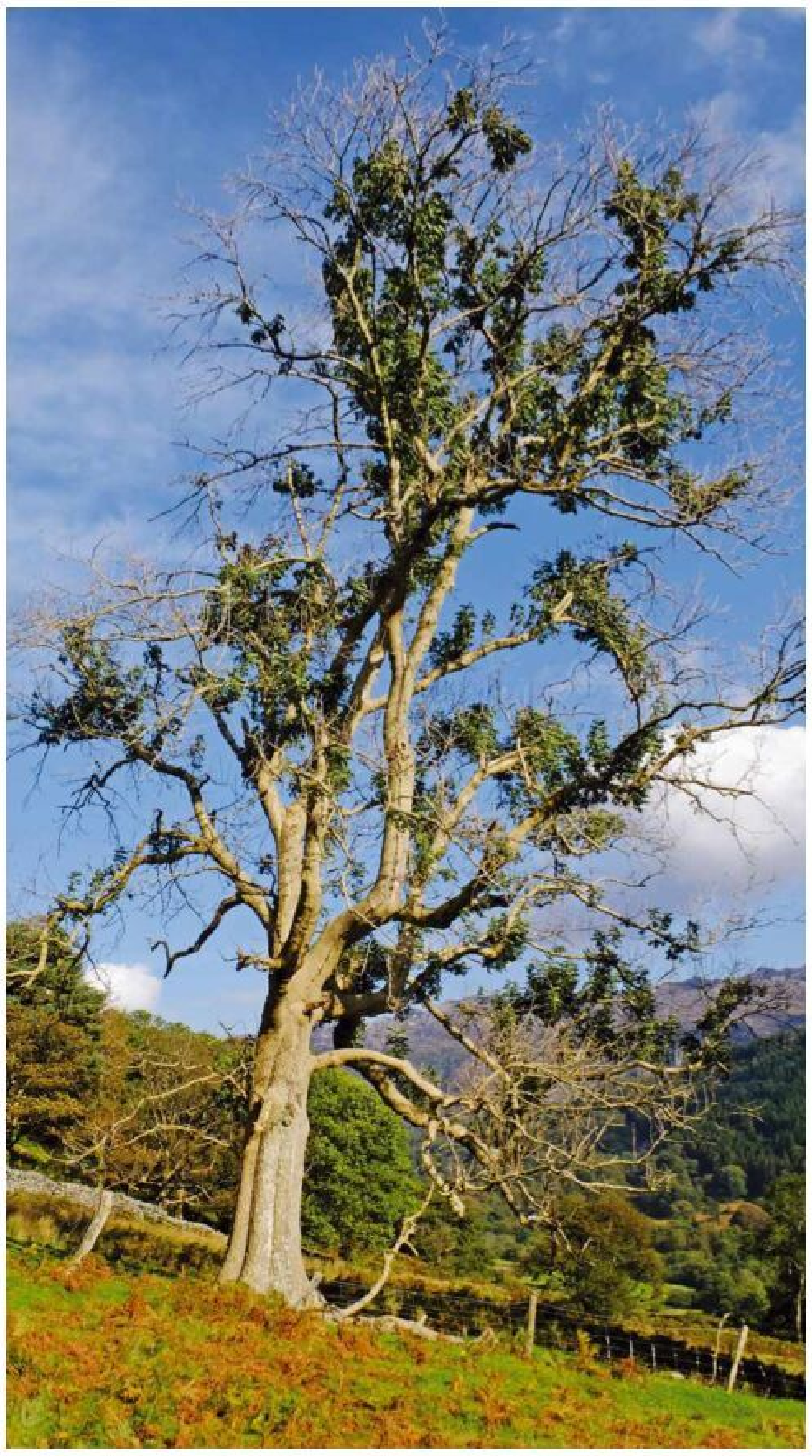
"The devastation here has been almost total," says Mark Ballard, curator at Westonbirt, The National Arboretum in Gloucestershire. He's had to fell about 5,000 trees affected by ash dieback in the Arboretum's ancient Silk Wood, which dates back to the 13th century. But Mark says he's seizing the chance to future-proof the woodland by replanting it with trees resilient to climate change, like the small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*) and the wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*). "We're keeping one eye on the future," he says.

Research suggests up to 5 per cent of native ash trees should have some resistance to the disease, so conservationists are now pinning their hopes on a living ark of trees that made it through earlier outbreaks and could have some natural immunity. Saplings propagated from these survivors have been growing in the National Archive of Tolerant Ash since 2018, in what the government calls, "a major step towards landscape recovery".

Three years on, about 40 per cent of the original 1,000 trees have died – but about one in five shows no signs of disease, while a further 17 per cent have only minor symptoms. Project lead Jo Clark says she's also seeing healed lesions on infected trees, suggesting that some trees may be fighting the disease themselves. "Ash is very genetically diverse," she says. "Even if we did absolutely nothing at all ash trees will recover."

Work is now under way to identify a second tranche of potentially resistant trees to add to the collection from next year. In the meantime, the project wants woodland owners to keep their eyes peeled for potential saviour ash trees: those still standing tall and leafy while others growing nearby have succumbed.

■ *Report potential survivors via livingashproject.org.uk/reportatree*



**Researchers believe that ash trees' genetic diversity can help them fight dieback**

> *"About 40 per cent of the original trees have died, but one in five shows no signs of disease"*

## Toads living the high life

Breaking news: toads live in trees. Volunteers surveying tree cavities and nest boxes looking for hazel dormice and bats have found much wartier occupants instead, sometimes as high as 3m above ground. Fifty toads have now been recorded living in trees, suggesting as many as one in 100 trees – especially in damp woodlands – may have toads in their holes.

The findings have stumped environmentalists as toads don't have ideal physiques for tree climbing. "Nobody looks for toads in trees," says Dr Silviu Petrovan, report author for the People's Trust for Endangered Species, which supported the research. He thinks the toads may be searching for food or avoiding parasites or predators.

■ *If you've found a toad in a tree, report sightings via Froglife's Dragon Finder app or email info@froglife.org*

## Plants with the feel-good factor

Healthy, lush houseplants make you happiest, research has found, while neglected, dying plants are best moved out of sight. Researchers from Reading University found houseplants with leafy canopies such as devil's ivy and weeping fig give the biggest boosts to wellbeing. But unhealthy plants bring you down.

Jade Murray, author of *The Indoor Garden: Get Started No Matter How Small Your Space*, says houseplants make you feel good because they change constantly as they grow. "You build a relationship with them," she says. "It's almost like having pets."

**Houseplants like this devil's ivy can help lift low spirits**

## Dormice head north

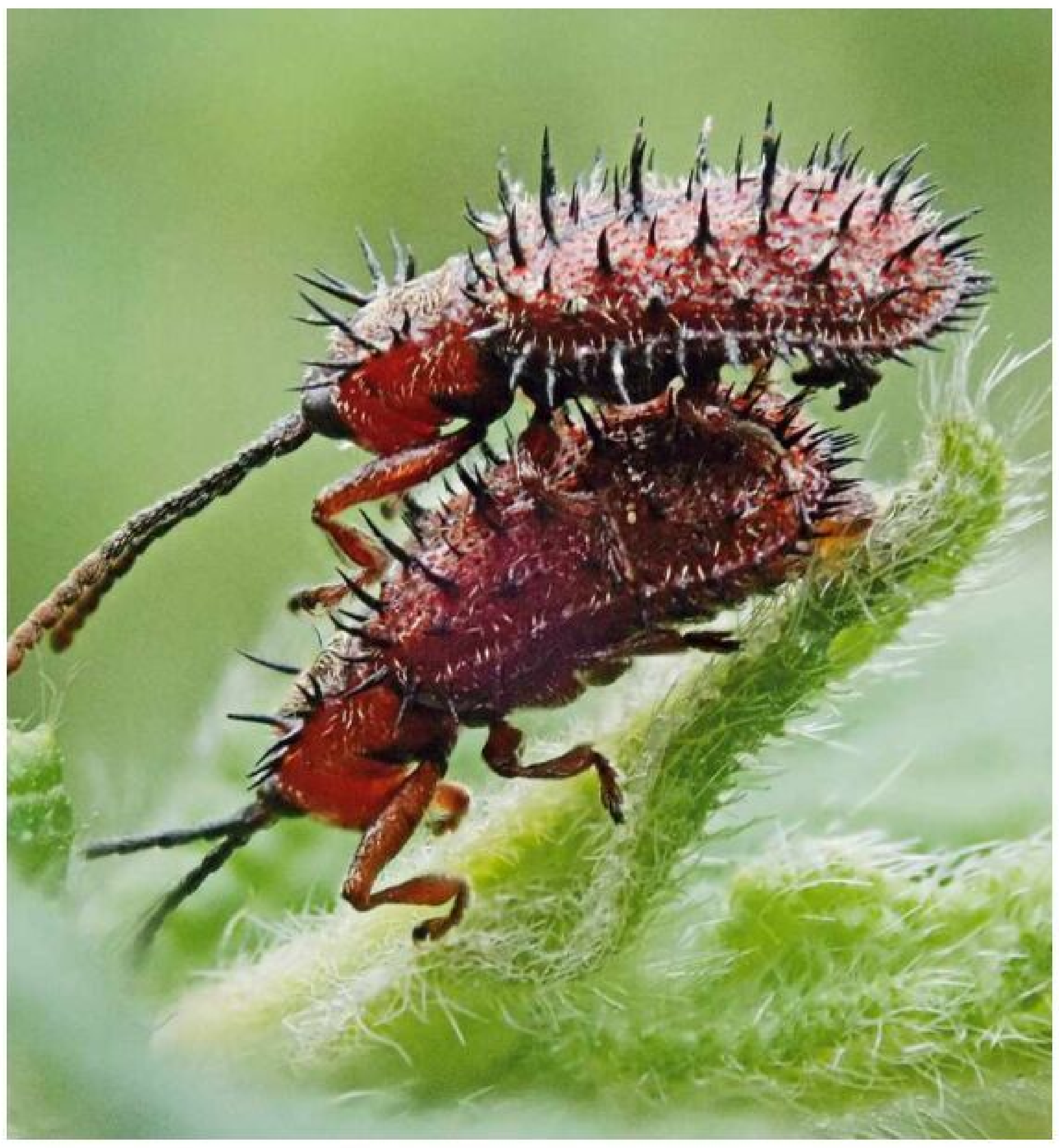
Dormice are back in Lancashire for the first time in a century after volunteers released 39 captive-bred mice into ancient woodland near Carnforth. It's hoped the furry pioneers will head a northern comeback for the endangered species.

■ *For more info, go to: ptes.org/campaigns/dormice*

## Prickly beetle finds refuge from climate change

A small, spiny Mediterranean beetle that lives on rockroses (*Cistus*) has turned up in Britain for the first time after a gardener spotted it on a shrub in south-west London. Rockrose prickly beetles do little damage to plants and RHS Principal Entomologist Dr Andrew Salisbury says they're among a wave of exotic new arrivals as insects flee north to escape climate change. "Gardens act like corridors," he says. "They're vitally important."

■ *Report sightings at bit.ly/rockrose-beetle*



**The rockrose prickly leaf beetle feeds on plants but does not do any significant harm**

## Sissinghurst trains 'gardeners of the future'

A new horticultural training programme set to become one of the most prestigious in the country kicks off this month as the National Trust's first Sissinghurst Scholarship programme takes up the trowel. The 18-month apprenticeship is aimed at nurturing 'the gardeners and head gardeners of the future'. **bit.ly/sissinghurst-scholarship**

**Councils rewilding verges hope to encourage biodiversity but long grass near busy roads could be dangerous**

## Councils caught in crossfire over long grass

One in five councils are rewilding verges and parks as they come under pressure to act on boosting biodiversity and tackling climate change. But many are finding themselves caught between residents angry at 'unkempt' road verges, and conservationists urging them to do more.

Medway Council, Kent, pulled out of the No Mow May campaign this year after grass-cutting requests by local residents more than doubled. Other people, though, signed a petition to continue rewilding so the council now takes a hybrid approach. "We have continued to do our bit," says assistant director of frontline services Ruth Du-Lieu. "But in some areas it could be dangerous to leave grass to grow, particularly on roundabouts or busy junctions."

Meanwhile, wildlife presenter Chris Packham accused Oxford City Council of "eco-vandalism" for mowing down wild orchids flowering on a roundabout. Councillor Imogen Thomas of Oxford City Council says the roundabout was one of 26 locations trialling different mowing regimes and will now be cut just once, in late summer. "We encourage locals to talk to their neighbours and agree whether or not they want the verges cut," she says.

WORDS: SALLY NEX PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; GETTY/ALISDAIRJAMES, MICHAEL LEACH, MIKE POWLES; JASON INGRAM; NATIONAL TRUST/ARNHEL DE SERRA; DANIEL WHITTAKER HALL

# My gardening world
## Emma Bridgewater

**Emma Bridgewater's cottage chic earthenware pottery, with its trademark polka dots and nature-inspired designs, charms tea-drinkers and decorates kitchens around the world. She started the business after she couldn't find a mug to give her mum as a birthday present: it's now one of the largest pottery manufacturers in the UK.**

Plants are a regular feature on Emma's work

**Your designs have always shown a huge affection for gardens and gardening – where does that spring from?**
I come from a long line of competent gardeners. But I thought gardening was something I'd come to later. Then when I was in my early 30s my mother had an awful riding accident: she lived for some time, but she didn't ever speak again. So I wasn't able to do the planned download, 'All right Mum, tell me about gardens'. I still learned a lot through the back of my head.

**How do you use your garden for inspiration?**
The garden is a form of meditation rather than a reference library. Design inspiration is putting oneself in the way of a feeling of intense recognition and longing. It's about asking: "How can the world be this wonderful? How can I make something that demonstrates how much you appreciate the loveliness of a garden full of butterflies dancing or larks flying over?"

**What do you enjoy growing in your garden at the moment?**
I live on the north Norfolk coast, which is very dry with thin, sandy soil, so it throws up a lot of very nice wildflowers – great clumps of scabious and moon daisies, and a slightly distressing amount of ragwort. I do know it's rather unjustly hated and it's a terrific habitat for insects, so I try to look kindly on it but there's something about having had ponies as a child that means it's still the enemy.

**You've released a series of special-edition mugs this year for the National Garden Scheme – would you consider opening your own garden to the public?**
I don't think my garden would quite cut the mustard. We did it a lot at Bampton [Emma's former Oxfordshire home]. There, the garden went from absolutely nothing, to something pretty spectacular. It was more, "I've got my roses here and I've got my vegetables there" – so it was tick, tick, tick, rather than, "What do I really love? What wants to happen here? And are the birds having a nice time?"

## New plants steal the show

In a stellar year for new plant releases, a sweet pea named after the late garden writer Peter Seabrook has won best new plant at BBC Gardeners' World Live. Breeder Chris Wiley said he named the 'Peter Seabrook' sweet pea (left) after watching Peter "fall in love" with it after spotting it in plant trials. *GW*'s Adam Frost presented a posy of the sweetly scented lavender-blue flowers to Dame Mary Berry at the show.

A remarkable 26 new plants were on show on GW Live's Peter Seabrook Tribute Display. They included a pollen-free lily, 'Soft Romance', described as a 'breeding breakthrough'; a seed-raised black petunia, 'Experimental Black'; and a new crab apple, 'Halloween', which has ribbed fruits resembling mini pumpkins.

■ *Sweet pea 'Peter Seabrook' will be on sale later this year via Mr Fothergill's mr-fothergills.co.uk*

## Hunt for memorabilia

If there's a giant floating tap in your shed, Glasgow University wants to hear from you. Researchers are trying to trace hundreds of artefacts auctioned off after the 1988 Glasgow Garden Festival. Among lost objects are a statue of Moses, 24 scarecrows, and a miniature railway.

"Culturally it was a big moment for Glasgow – but then it was scattered," says project leader Lex Lamb.

■ *Submit photos of Glasgow Garden Festival objects at glasgowgardenfestival.org*

**The Glasgow Garden Festival floating tap remains lost**

## News in brief

1

**GIANT HIDES AT KEW**

Scientists at Kew have discovered a new giant waterlily growing right under their noses. *Victoria boliviana* was stored in Kew's herbarium but wrongly labelled; it was identified after experts planted it in the garden's waterlily house. *kew.org*

2

**ANCIENT TREES**

A new map of ancient trees has used computer modelling to suggest there are about two million trees of exceptional age or cultural value in England – ten times as many as are on official records. *woodlandtrust.org.uk*

3

**HIDDEN GARDEN REVEALED**

This summer's scorching weather has revealed the shadowy outline of a hidden 17th-century garden beneath a lawn at Chatsworth in Derbyshire. The ornate Great Parterre featured scrolled beds and intricate paths but was grassed over in 1729. *chatsworth.org*

4

**CONGRATULATIONS DR MARK!**

*GW* TV presenter Mark Lane has accepted an honorary doctorate from the University of Kent for his 'inspirational' career in garden design and media.

5

**LONGEST HEDGEHOG STREET?**

Could gardeners in your street create a 'hedgehog highway' and win the title of Britain's Biggest Hedgehog Street? Send in your bid by 10 Sep to *bit.ly/hh-comp*

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; STUART PURFIELD; RBG KEW/INES STUART-DAVIDSON

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# 2 for 1 entry

## Highlands & Islands

This month we're in Scotland, enjoying big savings with our **2 for 1 Entry Card**. September is a great time to explore the wild and romantic west coast, with its many beautiful gardens but without all the tourists (and midges) of high summer

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### Romantic ruins

**Armadale Castle Gardens** on the Isle of Skye offer more than just spectacular views over the Sound of Sleat. The castle, now a ruin, was once home to part of the mighty Clan Donald. The surrounding gardens mainly date from the 19th Century. The arboretum was planted in Victorian times and today provides spectacular autumn colour. Wander the 40-acre estate with a downloadable audio guide to find out more about Armadale's illustrious past. **Open**: 1 Apr-30 Oct, Wed-Sun, 9.30am-5pm. Single visitor discount 20%. Full details at **armadalecastle.com**

SAVE £13

### 'Seal' of approval

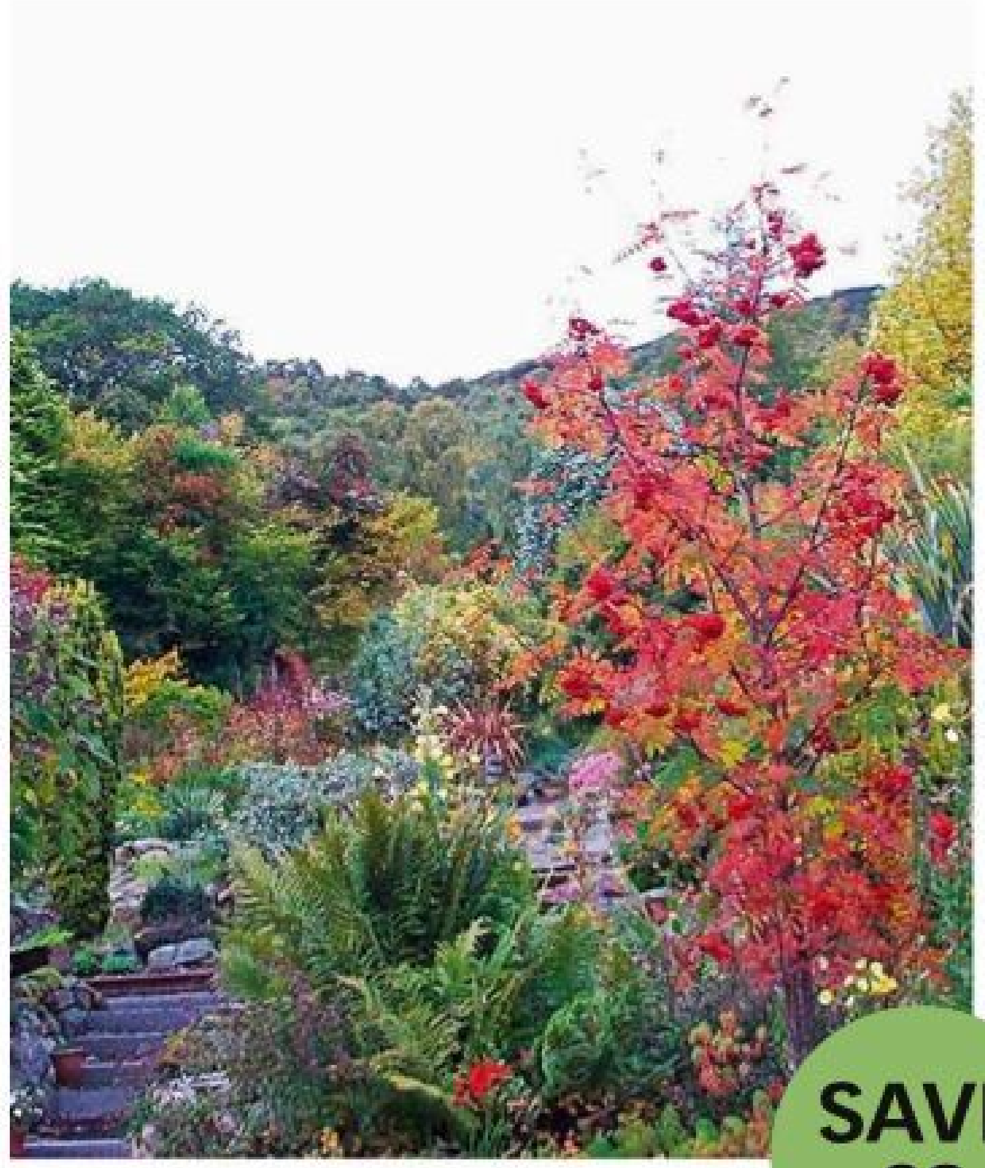
Like so many Scottish 2 for 1 Gardens, **Inverewe** is a brilliant place to spot wildlife, including the 'big five' – red squirrels, red deer, eagles, otters and seals. The warming waters of the Gulf Stream encourage rich biodiversity and allow many astonishing plants from around the world to thrive in this lochside location. The garden's many treasures include towering Californian redwoods and Himalayan blue poppies. **Open** 20 Apr-29 Oct, Tue-Sat, 9.45am-4pm. Card valid on Sat only, excluding event days – check before visiting. Full details at **nts.org.uk/inverewe**

PHOTOS: ATTADALE GARDENS; ARDTORNISH ESTATE; PHILIP LOVEL; NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

## Feeling good

SAVE £10

**Attadale Gardens** was recently crowned the Scottish winner of the RHS Partner Garden of the Year Awards. The competition asked visitors to vote for their favourite 'feel good' gardens across Scotland, in recognition of the health and wellbeing benefits of garden visits. With views across Loch Carron to Skye, Attadale boasts a diverse range of garden styles, from a contemplative Japanese garden to a lush water garden. Keep an eye out for the many beautiful sculptures too. **Open**: 1 Apr-30 Oct, daily, 10am-5pm. Full details at **attadalegardens.com**



## Plant paradise

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Overlooking Loch Ness, **Abriachan Gardens** is just 20 minutes from Inverness. On its steep wooded slopes, native and exotic plants jostle for room, and there are always new planting projects. So as well as providing woodland walks and views over the Great Glen, this is also a great source of planting inspiration. **Open** 1 Feb-30 Nov, daily, 9am-7pm (or dusk if earlier). Single visitor discount £1. **lochnessgarden.com**

## Seasonal spectacle

SAVE £4

Many lament the approach of autumn, as our gardens begin to wind down for the year. But at **Ardtornish Gardens** the end of summer heralds one of its most colourful seasons. Elegant white eucryphia flowers open, while vivid autumn foliage abounds. Trees and shrubs such as *Enkianthus* and *Oxydendrum* light up the garden with their burning red leaves, while cherries, including *Prunus* x *subhirtella* 'Autumnalis', provide glowing yellow and orange hues. Red cotoneaster berries glisten in the autumn sun. Set on a rocky hillside, the garden also offers views along Loch Aline to the Isle of Mull. **Open** All year, daily, 9am-6pm. Full details at **ardtornish.co.uk**

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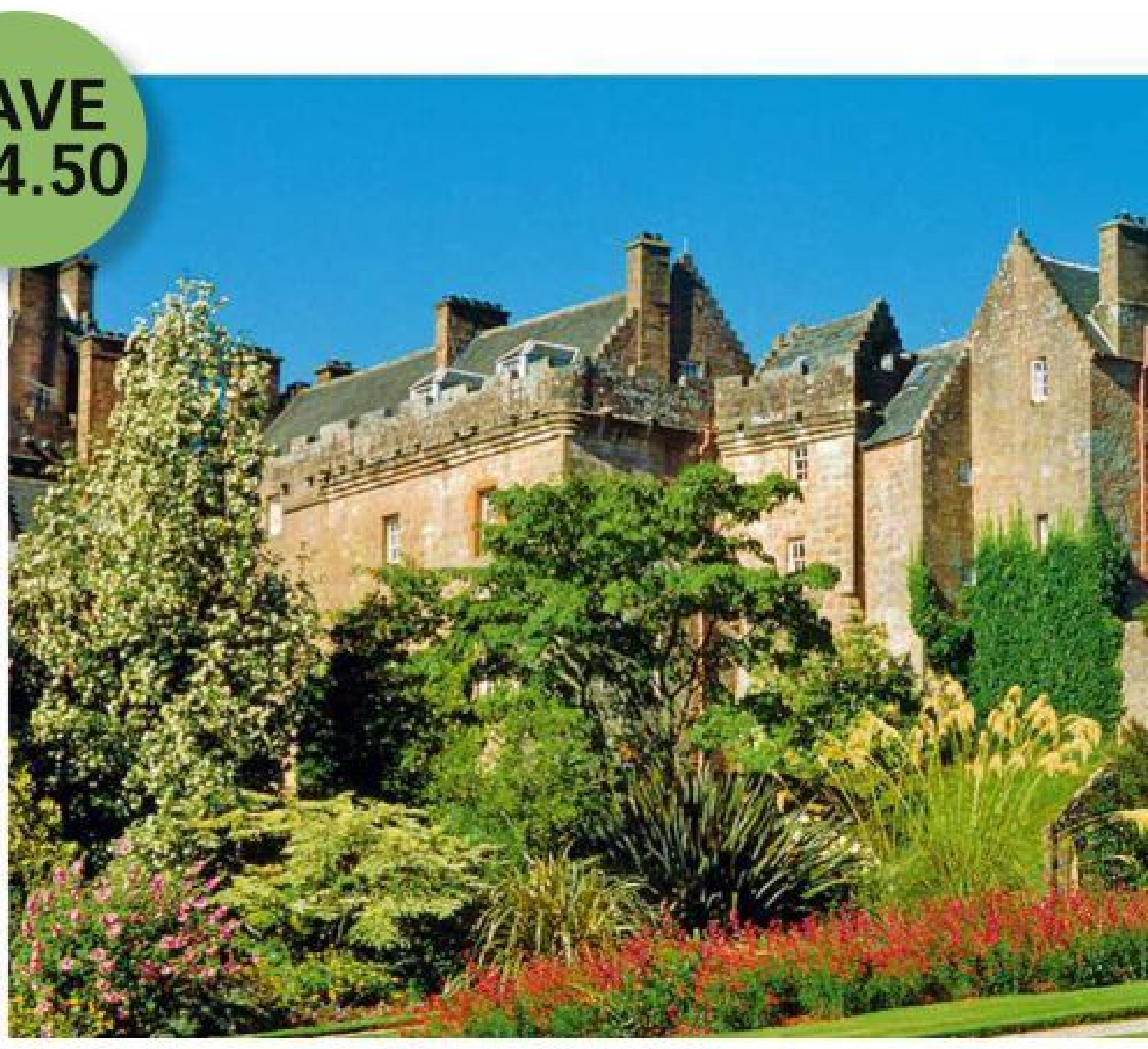

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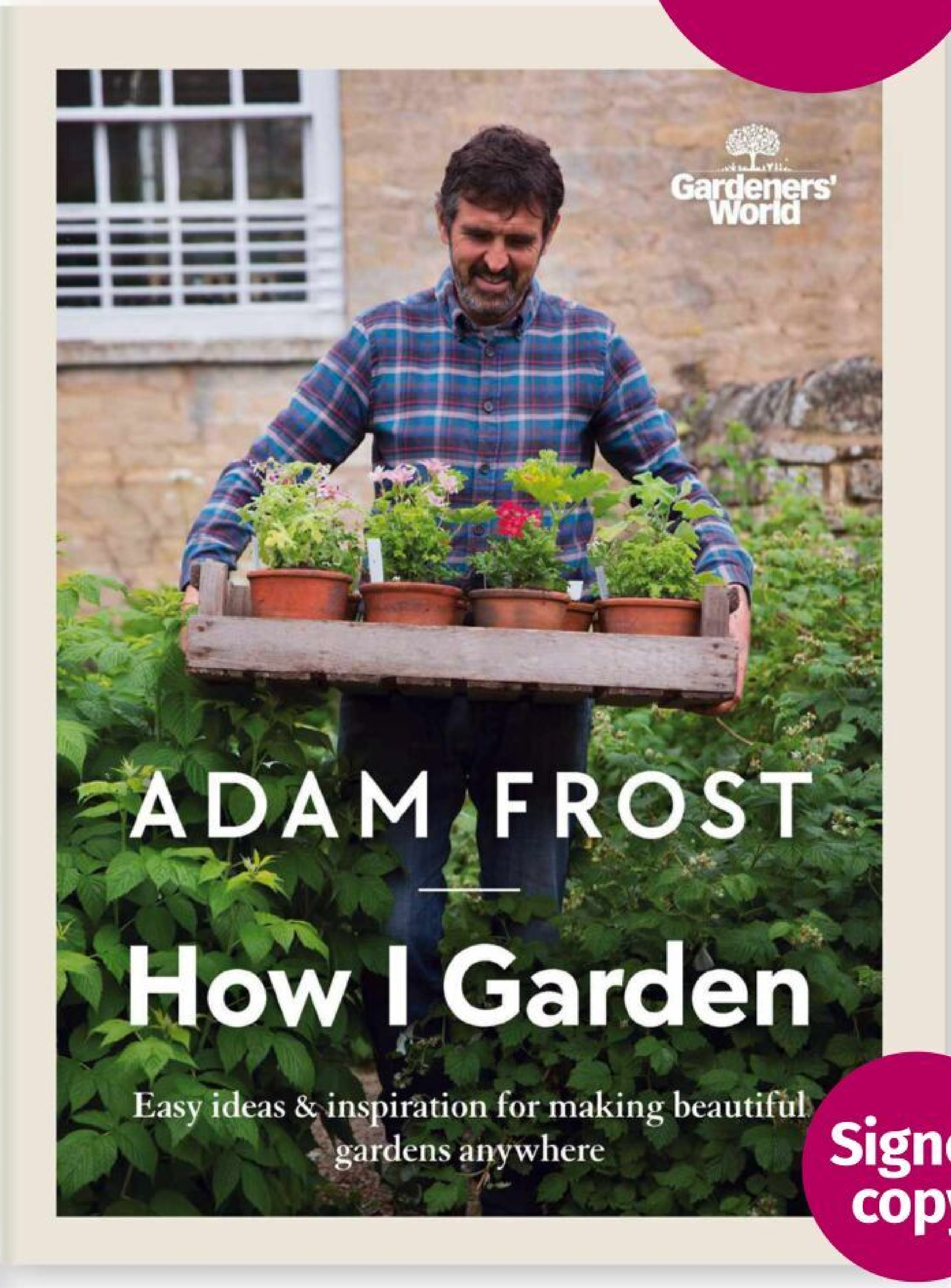
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> *“The thought of tulips lighting up next April and May is a beacon of hope that carries me through the grimmest of days”*

# *Beacons* of spring

As we leave summer behind, it's time to plan ahead, says **Monty** – and guarantee early colour in late winter and all spring by planting bulbs. Follow his guide to starting now for best results

**PHOTOS** JASON INGRAM

September moves summer gently into autumn. The destination into winter may not be where you want to go, but the journey is always a joy. It is a month of calm, tinged with loss, and that gentle sadness simply intensifies the preciousness of the present moment.

Bulb planting begins in earnest in September but continues busily into October with the one exception of tulips, which wait until November and even December for their planting. Increasingly, I grow bulbs in containers, which means that we are accumulating more and more pots, and the one rule of a good pot is that it must be filled with something most of the time. So scillas, muscari, narcissi, hyacinths, irises and fritillaries are planted in gritty compost, along with pans of winter-flowering pansies and violas.

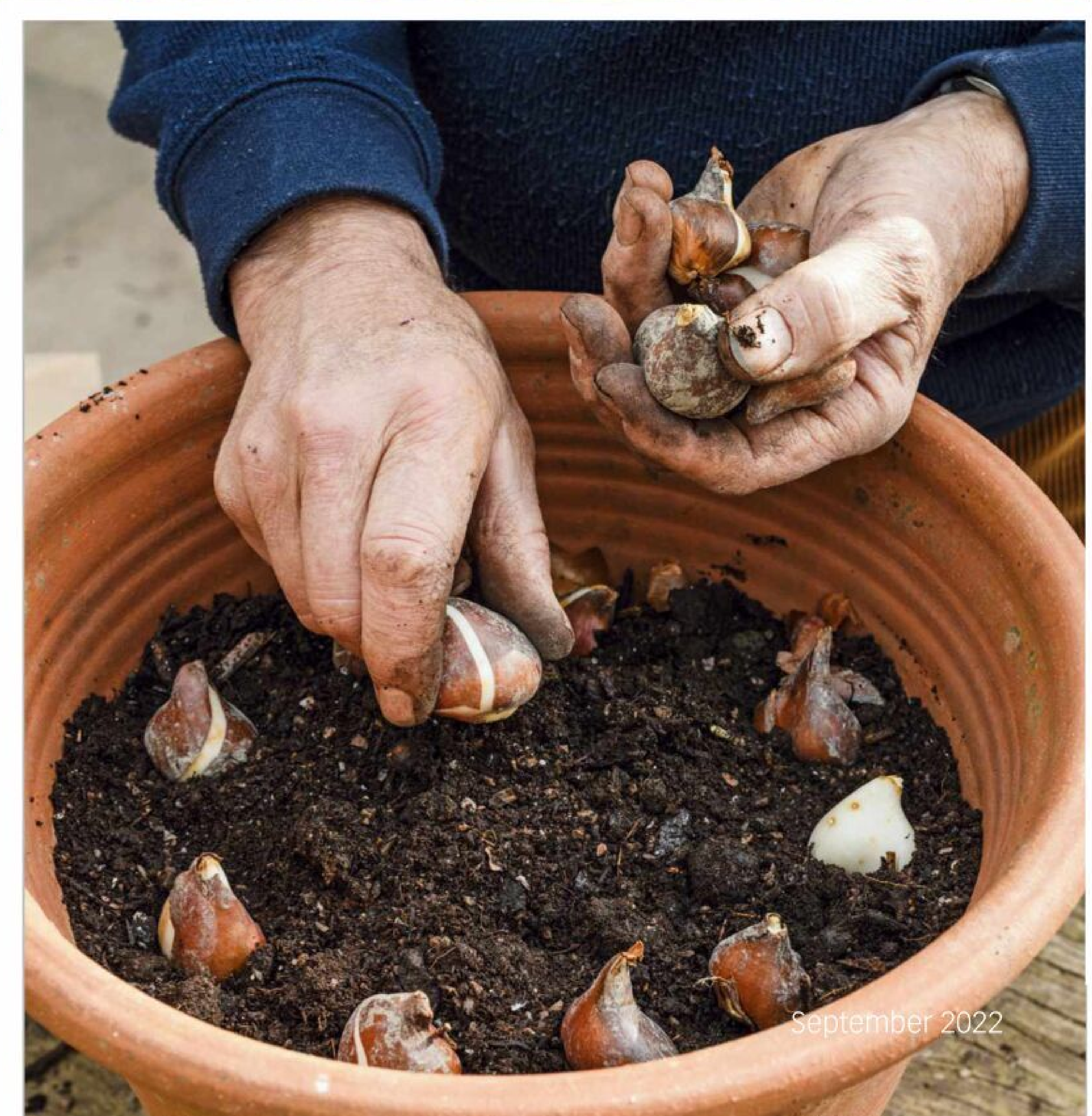
The larger pots see double or even triple service throughout the year, so bulbs are planted shallowly, often in big pans, and then removed after flowering and planted out to die back slowly so the pots can be replanted with a summer display. But as autumn progresses, it is the prospect of these displays of intense bulbs next February and March that sits quietly in these seemingly empty, grit-covered pots.

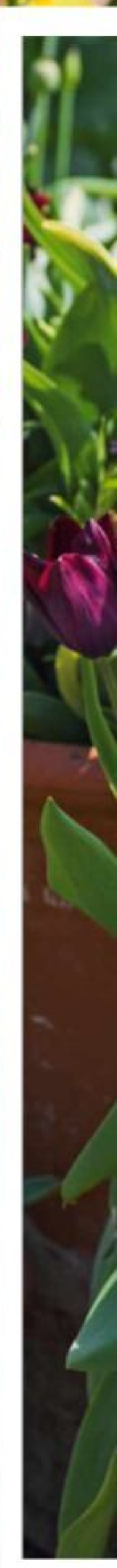
## Early colour

You don't need big, expensive containers to fill your midwinter garden with colour. Small pots, ranging from those roomy enough for a dozen small bulbs to a tiny one holding just a single snowdrop, look great both singly and in groups. I increasingly use terracotta alpine pans for bulbs and keep them in a cold frame, open at the sides but covered on top to protect them from waterlogging. I bring them into the greenhouse in relays to stir them into flower, from the end of January through to mid-March.

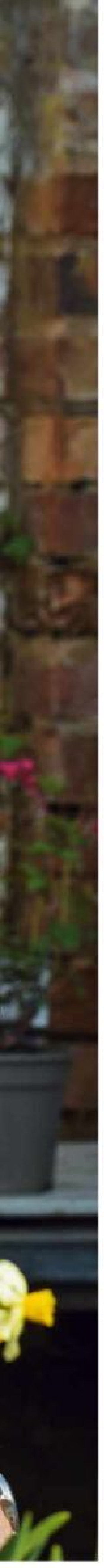
My favourite of the early bulbs are irises, particularly the reticulata, histrioides and danfordiae species. These early irises are all essentially alpine plants that only thrive in very sharp drainage and full sun – so they have little chance in Longmeadow's heavy soil, making them ideal for mollycoddling in a container. I plant them in an equal parts mix of potting compost and horticultural grit. Once the buds are an inch or so above the surface, I bring them into the greenhouse to open, then place them either on a table near the house, so they can be enjoyed from a window, or on a cool windowsill indoors. The key is to shelter them from too much rain and keep them cool, so they last as long as possible.

*Iris danfordiae* is bright yellow and one of the first to flower in mid-January. It is compact, so looks best in a shallow alpine pan. The bulbs are not expensive and tend to flower less well after the first year, so it is a good idea to buy fresh ones each year for the best display. *I. reticulata* flowers





**ABOVE** **Monty's collection of potted spring bulbs include narcissus and *Hyacinthus orientalis*** **OPPOSITE PAGE** **Planted together, the fiery colours of *Tulipa* 'Aquilla' complement the calming elegance of *T.* 'Havran'** **RIGHT** **Tulips grow well in pots. Plant bulbs at three times their height in free-draining, multi-purpose compost mixed through with grit**



> “As autumn progresses, it is the prospect of these displays of intense bulbs that sits quietly in these seemingly empty, grit-covered pots”

on short stems and looks like an especially glamorous crocus. I have the variety ‘Harmony’, which has particularly deep-blue flowers with a gold blaze on the lower ‘fall’. Its leaves remain quite stubby during flowering, but then grow taller to reach 30cm or more at maturity. ‘J.S. Dijt’ has rich reddish-purple flowers that open rather later, but is another superb choice.

*I. histrioides* is a member of the reticulata group. While the cultivar ‘George’ is especially magnificent, with rich plum-purple flowers that are rather larger than most others in this group, ‘Lady Beatrix Stanley’ has lovely blue flowers, with a yellow marking in the centre of the petals, carried on a short stem. All cultivars of *I. histrioides* flower strongly year after year for me and should ideally be planted as bulbs from mid-November. If planted in December, they would probably flower, but a lot later.

I also like to grow *Narcissus* ‘Geranium’ in pots. They have a lovely scent and once they start flowering, I move them to where we sit outside and enjoy their fragrance as well as display.

## Planning for tulips

The thought of tulips lighting up next April and May is a beacon of hope that carries me through the grimmest of days. Although conventional horticultural wisdom has long decreed that it is best to plant tulips from Bonfire Night on 5 November up until Christmas, we did some trials on this when *Gardeners’ World* was based at Berryfields near Stratford-upon-Avon. We planted a row of ‘Spring Green’ tulips in the same bed, at the same depth, exactly a month apart, in October, November, December, January, February and March. The upshot was that we could find no advantage at all to planting in October and no disadvantage in going into December. January tulips flowered later and with slightly shorter stems. The February ones were radically smaller and later flowering, while March-planted tulips did not flower and were clearly a waste of time and money. In short, try to plant in November, but do not worry if you have to wait until Christmas. Any left unplanted in the New Year should be placed in the ground as quickly as possible.

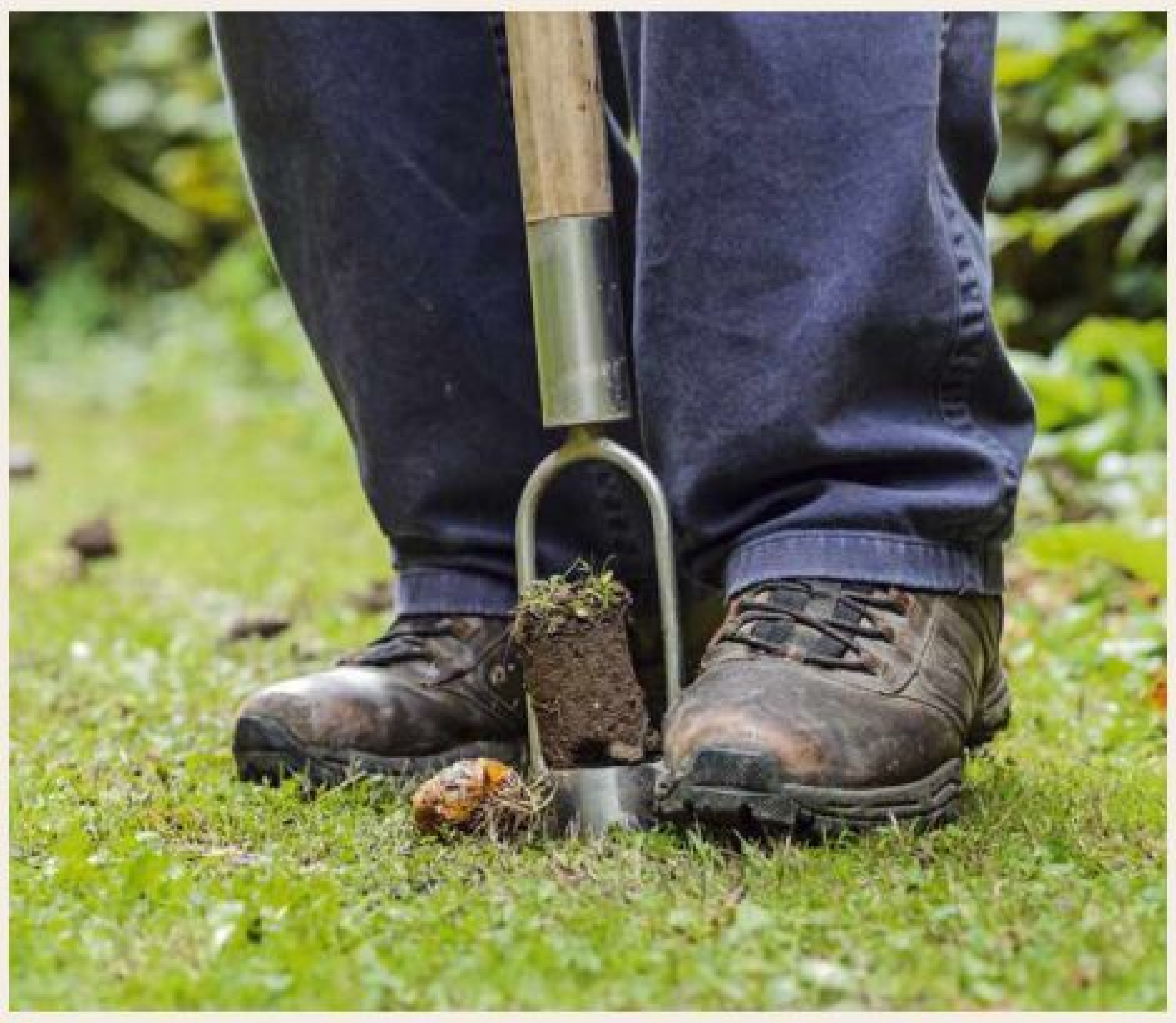
The reason for delaying until November is to avoid the risk of tulip fire. This is a fungal disease that initially often shows as twisted and mottled leaves emerging from the soil. You might see small pin-prick holes and lumps on the petals, and some visible grey mould on the leaves. The mould is a sign of the rot that can totally reduce a tulip to a molten-looking lump. By November the ground will be colder, so the disease is much less likely to spread.

All tulips crave the same ideal conditions. They need really good drainage and as much sunshine as you can give them. Some buck this trend better than others, but if in doubt add masses of grit and keep them out of the shade. Extreme cold and heat will not bother them at all, but tulip bulbs hate sitting in wet soil for too long.

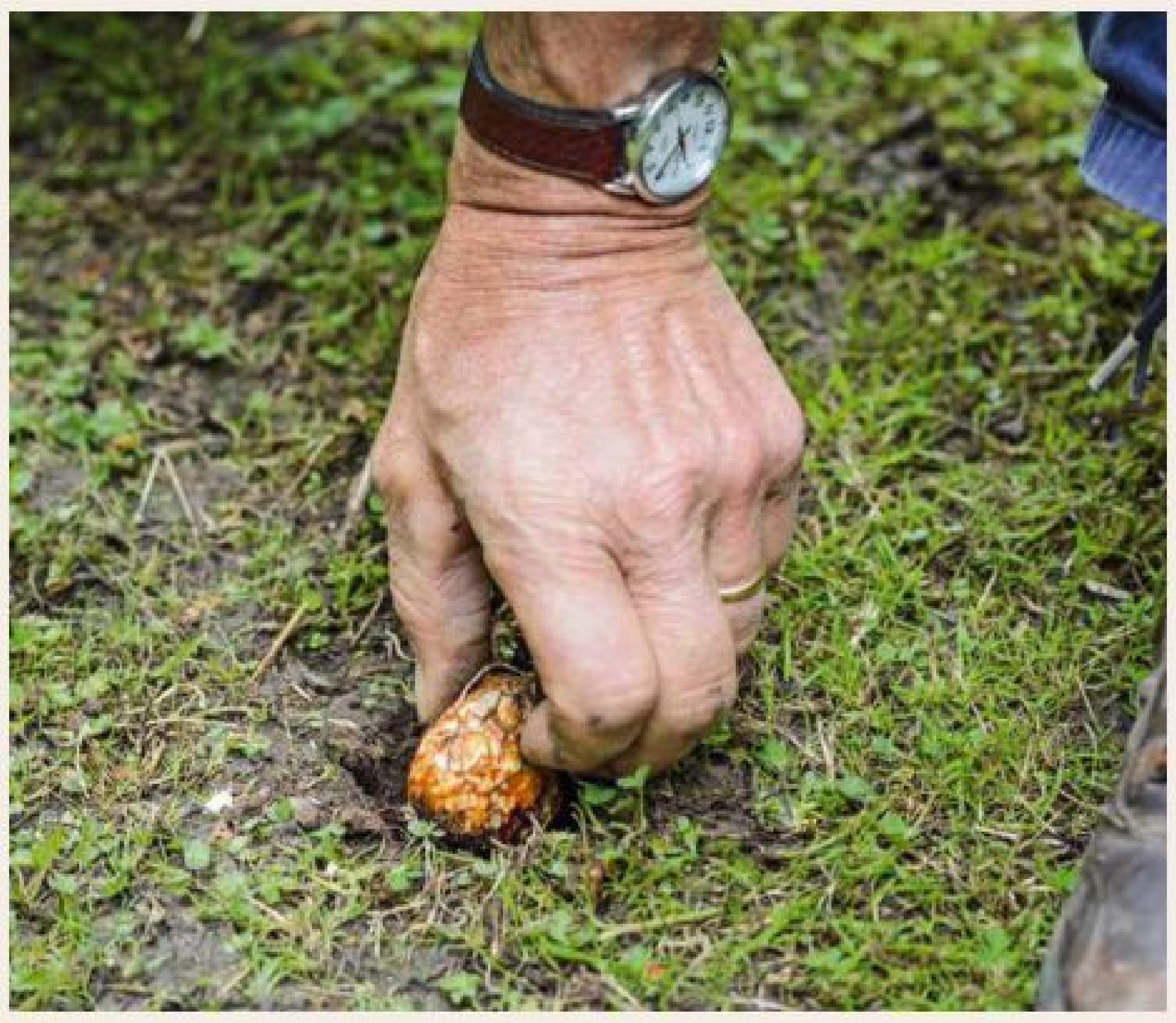
We plant our tulips in containers first, using the terracotta pots that are occupied by dahlias during the summer, so until these are cut back and put into storage the pots are inaccessible. We do sometimes plant tulip bulbs in plastic pots and then plunge these into the terracotta pots in spring, but they usually flower better if planted direct. This is because, when planted at a good depth, tulips tend to grow stronger and taller, within the limitations

## How to naturalise bulbs in the lawn

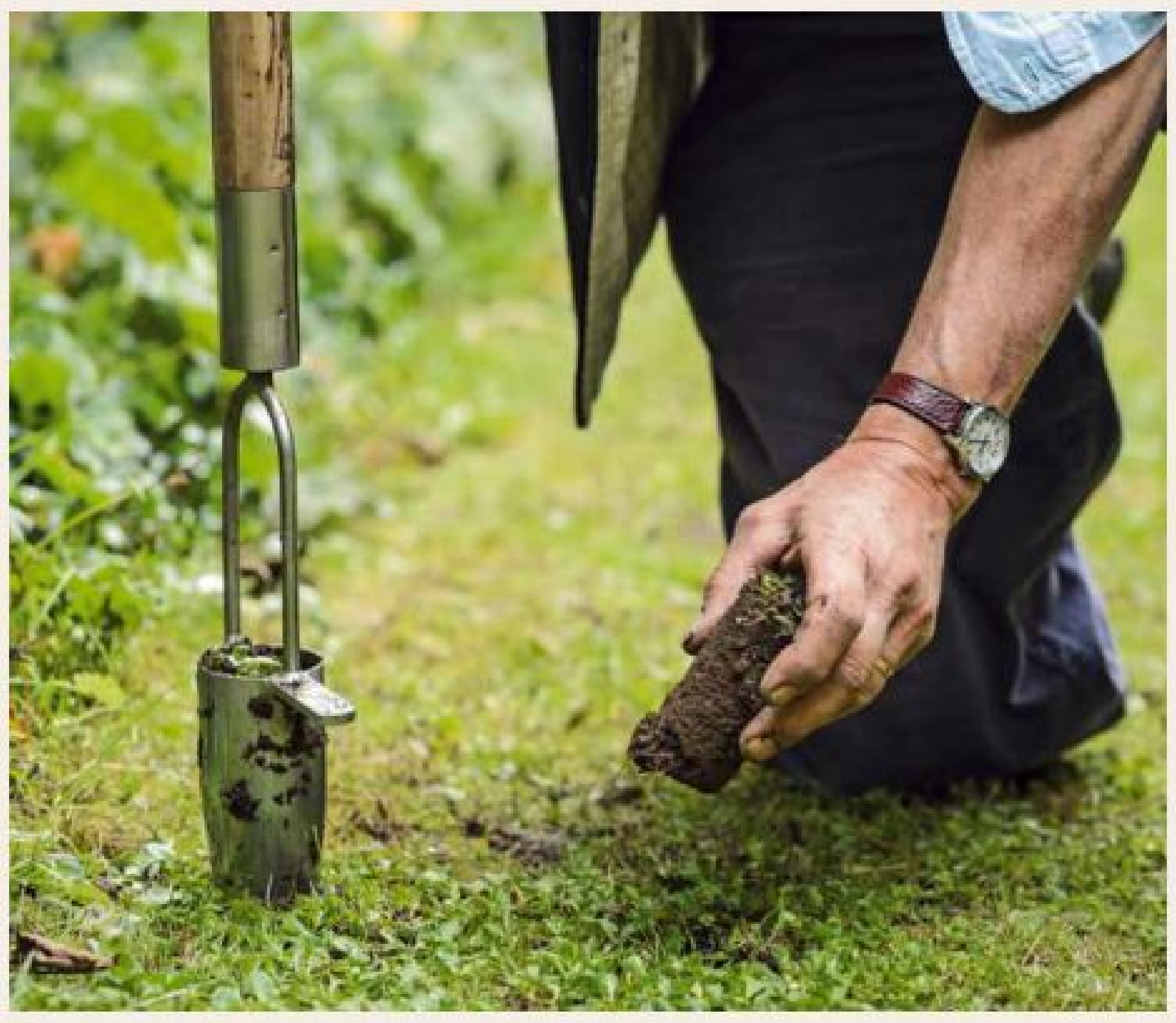
**To achieve a natural look, scatter spring-flowering bulbs such as camassia, crocus, daffodils or snake’s head fritillaries and then simply plant them where they fall. A long-handled planter saves bending.**



**1** USE YOUR FOOT to press the planter into the ground to the recommended depth for your bulb. Pull out a plug of soil.



**2** PLACE THE BULB in the hole, at a depth of three times its own height, with the pointed end upwards.



**3** PUT THE PLUG of soil and grass back in the hole, on top of the bulb, grass-side up. Gently firm in the plug without squashing the bulb.

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/naturalise-bulbs** for more advice on how to naturalise bulbs in grass

**LEFT** Bulbs such as *Iris reticulata* 'George' do not like wet soil, so are best grown in pots filled with a gritty compost mix to ensure good drainage **ABOVE** Monty packs single varieties of dwarf iris – here, 'Pauline' and 'Blue Note' – per container to intensify their colours

## Plant iris bulbs for early colour

**Because our winters are so wet at Longmeadow I don't risk planting bulbs, such as *Iris reticulata*, that need very good drainage directly into the ground, but grow them in bulb pans instead. I use a very gritty compost mix and plant the bulbs quite thickly in each pan, always using one variety per container but having a range across as many as a dozen pans. A layer of grit over the surface stops a crust of soil forming and, having watered them well, they go into a cold frame with a glass top but open sides, which keeps them dry but cool.**

**As the shoots appear in the new year, I bring a few pans at a time into the greenhouse to spur them into a succession of glorious flower to cheer up the dank winter days. Having planted up as many pots as possible with early bulbs I bring them on in a cold frame so they will flower early. As soon as the buds form, I place them strategically around the garden where they can be most appreciated as small, intense, jewel-like touches of winter colour.**

> *❝ We have tulips flowering from late March until late May – the memory of this adds a spring to my step ❞*

of the tulip type. On the other hand, if you are growing tulips in a border as part of mixed planting or as bedding, there is an argument for burying them just a few centimetres below the surface, where they can root into better soil. But this is only a good idea if the bulbs are to be lifted after flowering. If you want strong growth and any kind of permanent planting, then deep is good, and very deep is best.

### Lasting impression

Unlike daffodils, tulip bulbs do not last after flowering. Instead, they form new bulbs as well as much smaller bulbils. The bulbs that you buy are carefully bred, selected and grown for maximum size. In a good year, each plant will produce a couple of new bulbs, although these will almost certainly be smaller than the parent and the flowers they produce will be smaller, too. If you leave tulips in the ground year after year, the display will become increasingly erratic and comprise multiple, rather small flowers. So if you want maximum display, treat tulips as annuals and replace the bulbs every year. But that can become an expensive habit and I think that there is a compromise.

We buy new bulbs each year for the containers and place these in pride of place for the best possible effect. After they have finished flowering and have started to die back, we lift them, foliage and all. Then we sort through the bulbs and select the biggest ones, which we carefully dry in a sunny place until the foliage has completely withered. The very smallest we discard, but the medium-sized bulbs we plant in rows in the vegetable garden or in a spare spot in the nursery beds to grow on. If these flower next year they are picked as cut flowers. After a year or two, these bulbs are lifted in turn and planted out the following autumn in the borders to bulk out the numbers there. Give this system a year or two to get established and you'll find that you have wonderful displays in pots, a supply of cut flowers and a constant topping-up of tulips in the borders. It works well.

In a good year we have tulips flowering from late March (usually *Tulipa sylvestris*) through until late May ('Queen of Night' is usually the last to leave). It is a breathtaking, glorious performance – and it is the memory of this that adds a spring to my step. ☐

*Turn to page 68 for our gallery of 55 bulbs to plant now, for five months of colour next year*

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# PLANTS WITH PURPOSE

## Part 6: Shade

Not sure what to plant in shade? Then follow nature's lead, says **Carol Klein**, as she selects fabulous plants adapted to low light

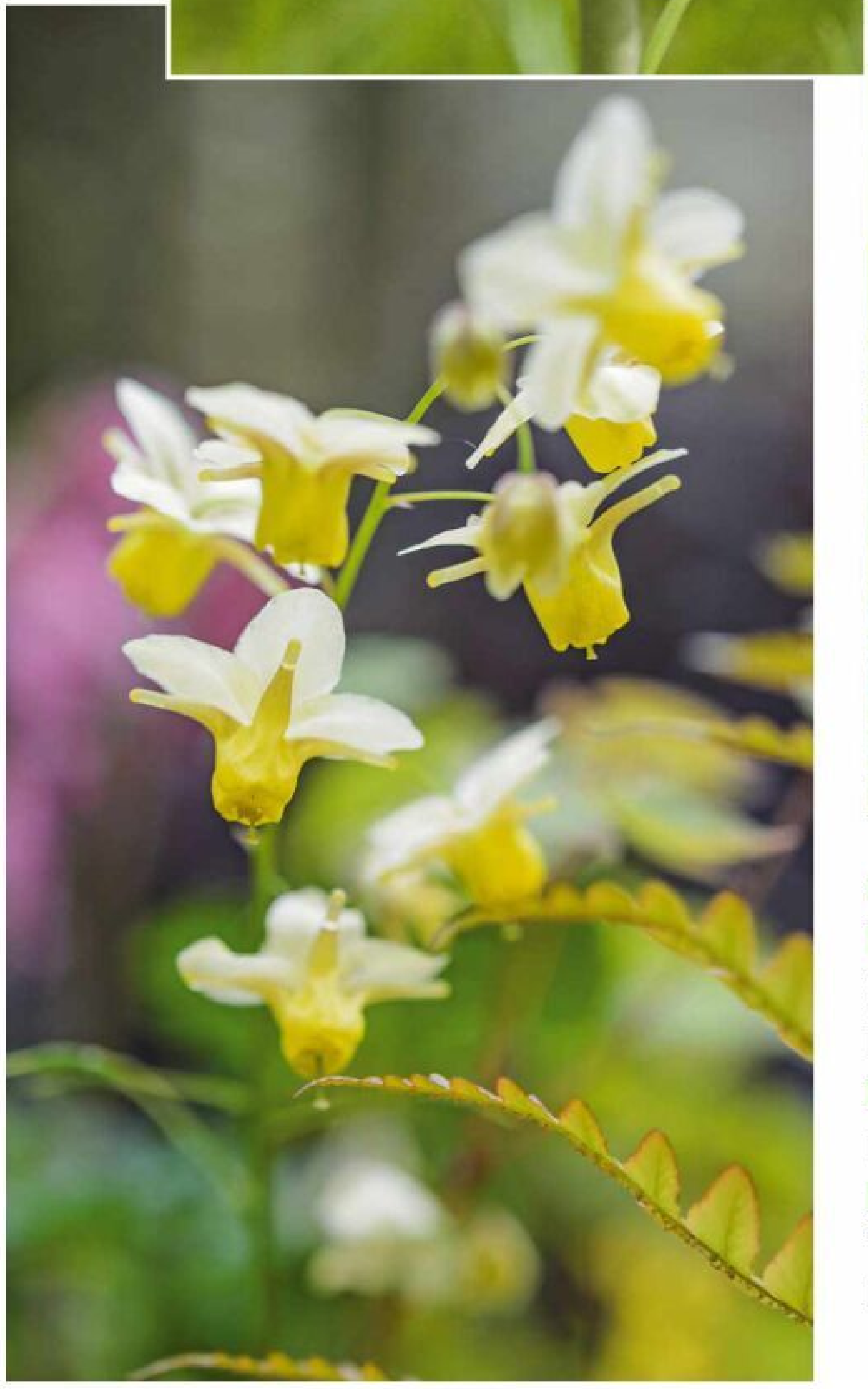
Toad lilies (*Tricyrtis hirta*) love dappled shade, where they produce their unusual speckled flowers through late summer. 'Taiwan Atrianne' offers particularly richly coloured flowers.
**Height x Spread** 1m x 45cm
**Flowers** Aug-Oct

PHOTO: SARAH CUTTLE

**For a plant to thrive in shade, it has to be a shade-lover. Sounds obvious? Yet it's so easy to expect a plant to put up with wherever you want to put it, just because you think it would look good there. With any plant, our main consideration has to be what that plant needs.**

**Of course, when considering new plants for any situation in our garden, we must first get to know the planting site and its soil. When we acknowledge what we have in any particular spot in our garden, we can then set about choosing plants that will thrive there.**

**Almost all our gardens have some shade, perhaps cast by a tree, the house or a garage at certain times of the day. Some people see shade as a problem, but for me it represents an opportunity to grow some of the most exciting plants on the planet.**



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**
- **Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)**
**Height x Spread** 40cm x 10cm **Flowers** Apr-Jun
- ***Lamium orvala***
**H x S** 50cm x 50cm **F** Apr-Jun
- ***Epimedium × versicolor* 'Sulphureum'**
**H x S** 35cm x 35cm **F** Apr-May

Nature's shady places, in particular deciduous woods, offer plenty of clues about what to grow in shady spots in our gardens. But they don't totally solve the problem. In the British Isles, spring is pre-eminently show time for the woodland floor, from January's snowdrops to June's bluebells, exploiting the extra light while the branches overhead are bare. In other woodlands, notably those of temperate Asia, in addition to plants that are at their best before the tree canopy fills in overhead, there's a batch of autumn flowerers – anemones, tricyrtis and kirengeshoma – that take advantage of the thinning canopy to do their thing.

One of the best examples of these is the group of Asiatic anemones usually known as Japanese anemones. Their elegant, chalice-shaped blooms in shades of pink or white are prolific and reliable without any attention. Another Asiatic perennial, *Kirengeshoma palmata*, produces soft yellow drooping bells on tall stems. This is a class act and proves that, far from presenting insurmountable problems, shady places offer a marvellous opportunity to grow an array of special plants.

But what about the long summer vacation, between spring's glory and autumn's bounty? We need to search carefully to ensure our shady places don't fall into ignominy during the summer months. Some native campanulas flower from June to August or even September. Our lovely giant bellflower (*Campanula latifolia*) thrusts up tall spikes of elegant blue or white bells. And the variety 'Gloaming' offers pale lavender-grey bells with dark staining deep in its throat. Several relatives of our native lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*) bloom in summer, contributing elegant stature and often scent, as well as autumn leaves emblazoned with gold and russet to prolong the magic. Try *Maianthemum racemosum* and Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum × hybridum*).

Foliage can play an important role too. In shade, *Astelia nervosa* will perform impeccably for 12 months of the year, forming a large clump of sword-like leaves. But it's often mis-used and planted into hot sunny containers by those who assume its silver foliage must denote it loves the sun. In fact, in its native New Zealand home it's a woodland plant, sometimes epiphytic – growing on trees – or when terrestrial, enjoying peaty soil.

For elegant ground cover and year-round interest, nothing compares with red-flowered *Epimedium × versicolor*, except perhaps its twin offspring: 'Sulphureum' with bright yellow flowers, and paler 'Neosulphureum'. All have delicate new foliage that becomes glossy and hard as the season progresses, reaching its burnished best during winter. In spring, clumps are laced with stems of clustered buds and dainty spurred flowers – shear away the old tatty foliage to help these really stand out.

One of a host of woodland grasses, Bowles's golden grass (*Milium effusum* 'Aureum') lights up my shadiest areas until autumn, going through different persona. It accompanies the first snowdrops and the hellebores, whose flowering continues well into April, joined by a host of bulbs. Wood anemones and epimediums continue the shady show, giving way to *Lamium orvala* and deinanthe, a herbaceous hydrangea relative, and augmented with an exciting dark-flowered form of *Geranium nodosum*. In autumn, the Asiatic woodlanders take over, then through winter there are periwinkles and the glowing berries of *Iris foetidissima*. Never a dull moment.

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; JASON INGRAM; GETTY/JACKY PARKER

> *"Far from presenting insurmountable problems, shady places offer a marvellous opportunity to grow an array of special plants"*

In light shade, martagon lilies such as 'Russian Morning' send up tall spires of flowers with reflexed petals and long anthers. **H x S** 1.5m x 30cm **F** Jun

## *Surefire success with: shade lovers*

**What to plant:** There are different degrees of shade and different kinds of shade. The dappled shade created by a dainty tree, such as a silver birch, apple or *Cercidiphyllum*, is a vastly different proposition to a place where no direct sunlight can penetrate, such as the north side of a tall fence or building. In truly dense shade, few flowers will grow and the go-to plants are ferns. In such places you can create a sea of green, relying heavily on texture, shape and form, using ferns in all their amazing diversity.

Hostas are often recommended for urban shade, but walls harbour snails and slugs, so they may be quickly decimated. Instead, choose tougher plants such as *Brunnera macrophylla*, whose heart-shaped leaves may not be quite as big and bold, but they will last. The variety 'Jack Frost' has silver foliage and sprays of brilliant blue forget-me-not flowers.

Many bulbs are in their element in dry shade. Underplant perennials with chionodoxa, scillas and snowdrops to add texture and depth, or martagon lilies for a splash of summer colour.

**How to care for shade lovers:** As with all planting, the mantra is emulate nature. So for woodland plants, add leaf mould or garden compost to the soil, then let them be their own wild selves.

# 5 *favourite shade plants*

### 1
### Erythronium

Dog's-tooth violets bloom in various hues, but bright yellow *Erythronium tuolumnense* and 'Pagoda' bring real spring cheer.
**Height x Spread** 25cm x 10cm
**Flowers** Apr

### 2
### Pulmonaria

Known for their silver-speckled leaves, pulmonarias have blue, white, pink or red flowers, loved by bees. 'Cotton Cool' is a great choice, and 'Majesté' offers striking pale glaucous leaves, often all year.
**H x S** 30cm x 60cm
**F** Feb-May

### 3
### *Helleborus foetidus*

This native hellebore often has several sturdy stems, each bearing bunches of lime-green bells edged with crimson. The deeply divided evergreen leaves are always dark, but in winter turn almost leaden, giving the plant a dramatic air.
**H x S** 80cm x 45cm
**F** Jan-Apr

### 4
### *Anemone × hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'

Tall and elegant, with single white flowers and golden stamens. Easy to grow and spreads easily.
**H x S** 120cm x 60cm
**F** Aug-Oct

### 5
### *Trillium chloropetalum*

The mottled leaves and deep crimson flowers look wonderfully dangerous and foreboding.
**H x S** 50cm x 50cm
**F** Mar-May

**2**
**Pulmonaria**

**4**
***Anemone × hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'**

**5**
***Trillium chloropetalum***

**Divide clumps of *Hakonechloa macra* 'All Gold' to make more, as it looks best in big swathes**

## *Plant with: shade lovers*

Before planting in shade, improve the soil – not by digging, which will damage any tree roots and compound water loss, but by mulching the surface with garden compost and/or leaf mould. This will hold in moisture and deter weeds.

When planting in the shade of trees, probe the ground gently with a hand fork to identify pockets of soil between the roots. Dig a hole slightly larger than the rootball and fork in leafmould or garden compost to help get your plant off to a flying start. Small, young plants settle in more quickly than larger, older ones. Give an initial thorough drenching after planting, then keep watering regularly until well rooted in.

Once established, your plants will spread, and the more the merrier in a shady spot, so divide clumps every few years, preferably when dormant. From a big clump of *Hakonechloa macra*, I made 20 new small plants, which I potted on, nurtured and planted out once they had good root systems. It's fun to try other propagation methods too – Japanese anemones grow readily from horizontal root cuttings.

**Gardeners' World offer** **SAVE 20% ACROSS PLANTS FOR SHADE RANGE**

Sarah Raven has a large range of beautiful plants for partial or full shade, to provide colour and interest across the seasons. Take your pick from foxgloves, anemones, cyclamen, ferns and much more, to brighten up all the shady areas of your garden.

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### Carol on TV

Catch **Carol** and the rest of the team on ***Gardeners' World*** on Fridays at 8pm throughout September.

BBC TWO

**NEXT MONTH** Carol explores the wonderful world of spring-flowering bulbs

PHOTOS: GETTY/SEVEN75; JASON INGRAM; TORIE CHUGG

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**PART 12 Getting started**

# *Where do I start?*

## Containers

**For beginner gardeners, getting to grips with the fundamentals can seem daunting. But in this exclusive series, Alan Titchmarsh is sharing his wisdom to help you master the skills that really matter.**

**This month, Alan looks at how to grow plants in containers, offering lots of practical tips and advice. You'll discover the benefits and challenges of container gardening, and the keys to success.**

### You'll learn about:

- ✔ Different types of containers and how to use them
- ✔ What to plant in pots and how to do it
- ✔ Looking after plants in containers

PHOTO: SARAH CUTTLE/ROSE MCMONIGALL, DIPLEY MILL, HARTLEY WINTNEY, HAMPSHIRE

*“Container gardening offers the chance to grow plants where there’s no space for huge displays or where growing conditions would otherwise be inhospitable”*

**Containers are ideal for beginners, allowing you to plant on a manageable scale, experiment with colours and create instant results**

# Containers

Nowhere do gardeners wield more power than when we grow plants in **containers**. The basic ingredients of plant growth are **food**, **water**, **light** and **air**, and in containers we – rather than Mother Nature – are responsible for supplying at least the first three of these things. As long as we do that, container gardening offers us tremendous **versatility** – a chance to grow plants where there's no earth for them to root into, no space for huge displays or where the growing conditions would otherwise be inhospitable to their wellbeing.

Another major benefit of containers is that they can be **moved around** at will, giving you the ability to **change your outlook** as often as you wish. In short, container gardening is the best way of refreshing a garden without the need for any huge upheavals, provided you remember that the secret of success is **generosity with food and water**.

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; JASON INGRAM

**ABOVE** Choose plants to suit the pot's location – hostas and ferns are perfect for a shady spot **INSET BELOW** Japanese maples look great in ceramic pots and can live for years if well-tended

## What exactly is a container?

The essence of container gardening is a restriction at the roots, so it can include everything from patio pots to windowboxes, hanging baskets to upcycled water tanks, and even raised beds. With the latter, the root restriction is relatively minor unless built on a hard surface, when a depth of at least 30cm is needed to keep most plants happy.

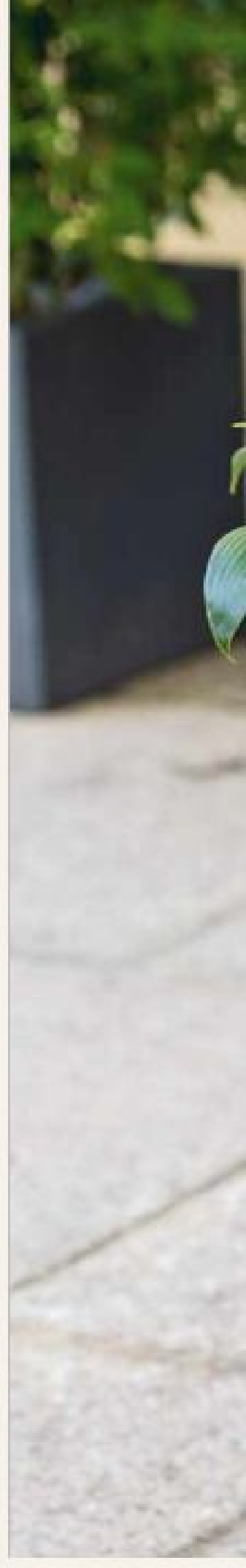
When choosing a container, look for one that holds enough compost to nourish and sustain your plants and allows water to drain out. If you grow plants in containers without drainage holes, there is a risk they'll literally drown – especially in damp British winters.

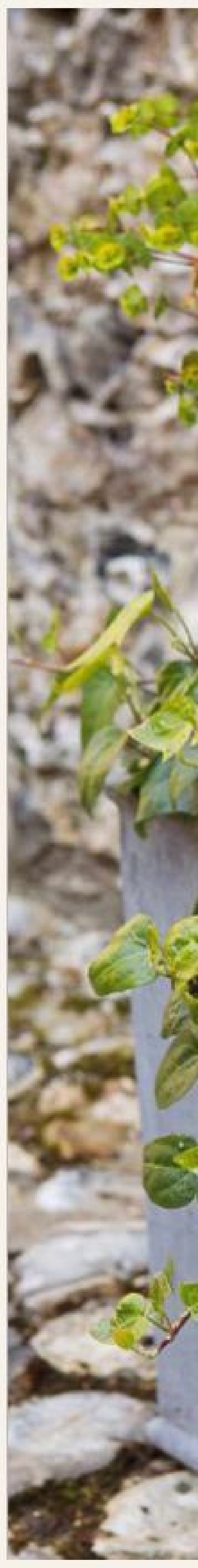
While lots of small pots on your patio, doorstep or balcony might create an interesting effect, bear in mind that the compost will dry out rapidly in warm weather, and your plants can all too easily crisp up and perish. It's far better to have a smaller number of larger pots, rather than a large number of smaller ones. Big containers give plants more compost to root into, and they'll be better fed and watered as a result, so their growth will be much healthier. Added to which, from a design point of view, three or four sizeable containers always look more striking than a clutch of smaller ones in disparate materials.

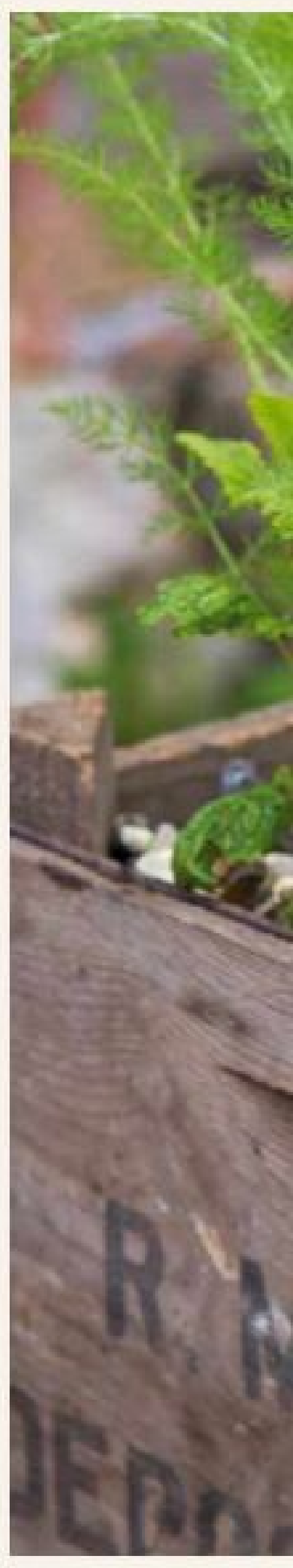
Take care when positioning your containers. Most plants like good light, but if your spot is shady, then choose plants that thrive in low light levels – ferns, hostas, ivy and numerous other shade-lovers. Sites exposed to wind will exacerbate drying out, not only of the compost but of delicate leaves on plants such as Japanese maples. A windbreak is a good idea on exposed balconies – close-weave netting or willow hurdles strapped to the balustrading.

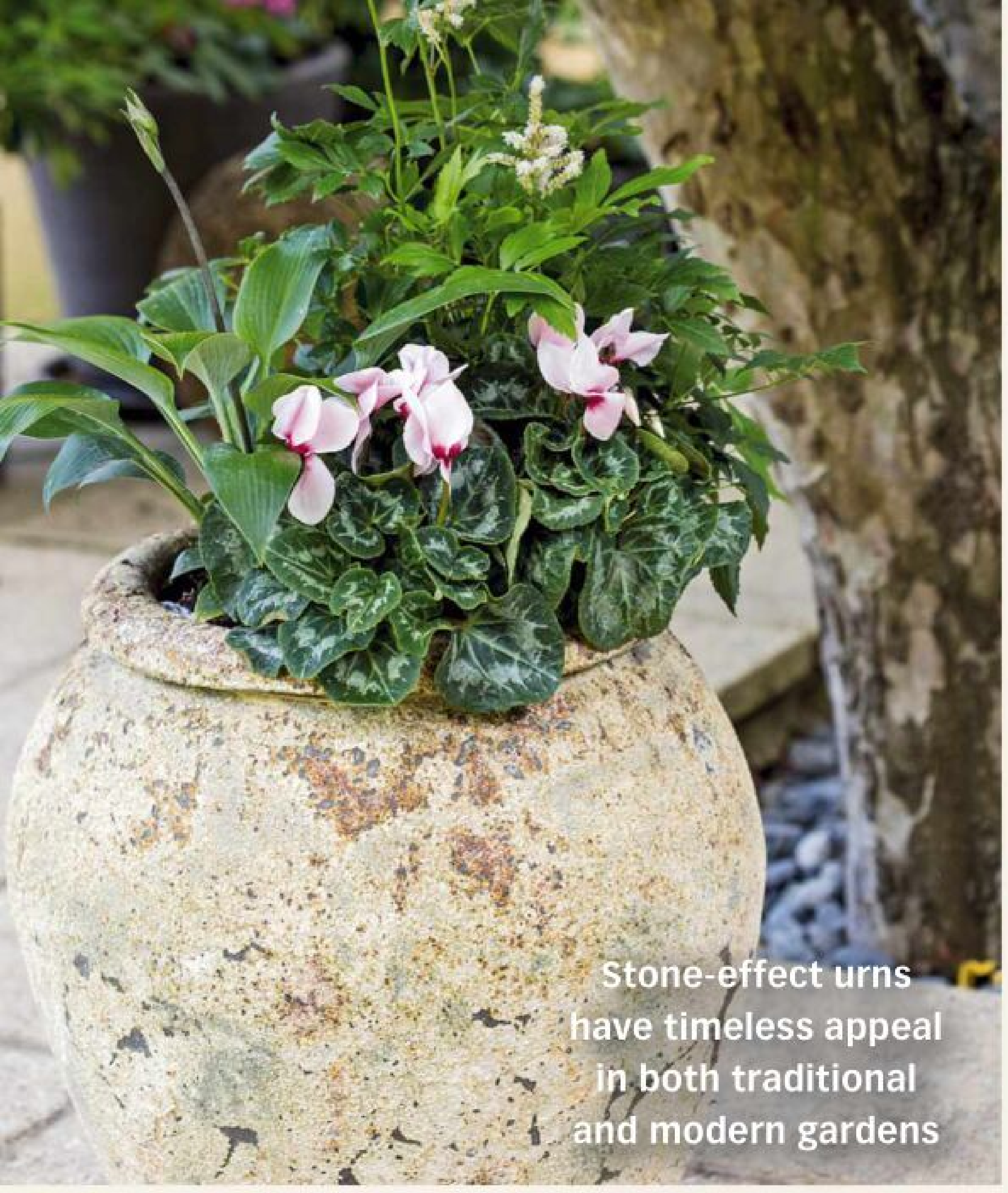
When it comes to choosing your plants, bear in mind you can actually grow anything in a container – trees, shrubs, perennials and more – but just be aware of the likely restrictions in terms of growth: an oak tree can be grown a large pot, but only for a few years before it needs a move. That said, I managed to keep a Japanese maple in a large container for 15 years, thanks to regular top-dressing each spring with fresh compost.

Compost choice is important too – peat-free multi-purpose compost is ideal for annuals and bedding, while perennials and larger plants prefer a soil-based mix, again peat-free, which offers more weight for stability and provides nutrients for longer. Just remember to put large containers in their final position before filling them. Sounds obvious, but it's easily overlooked.



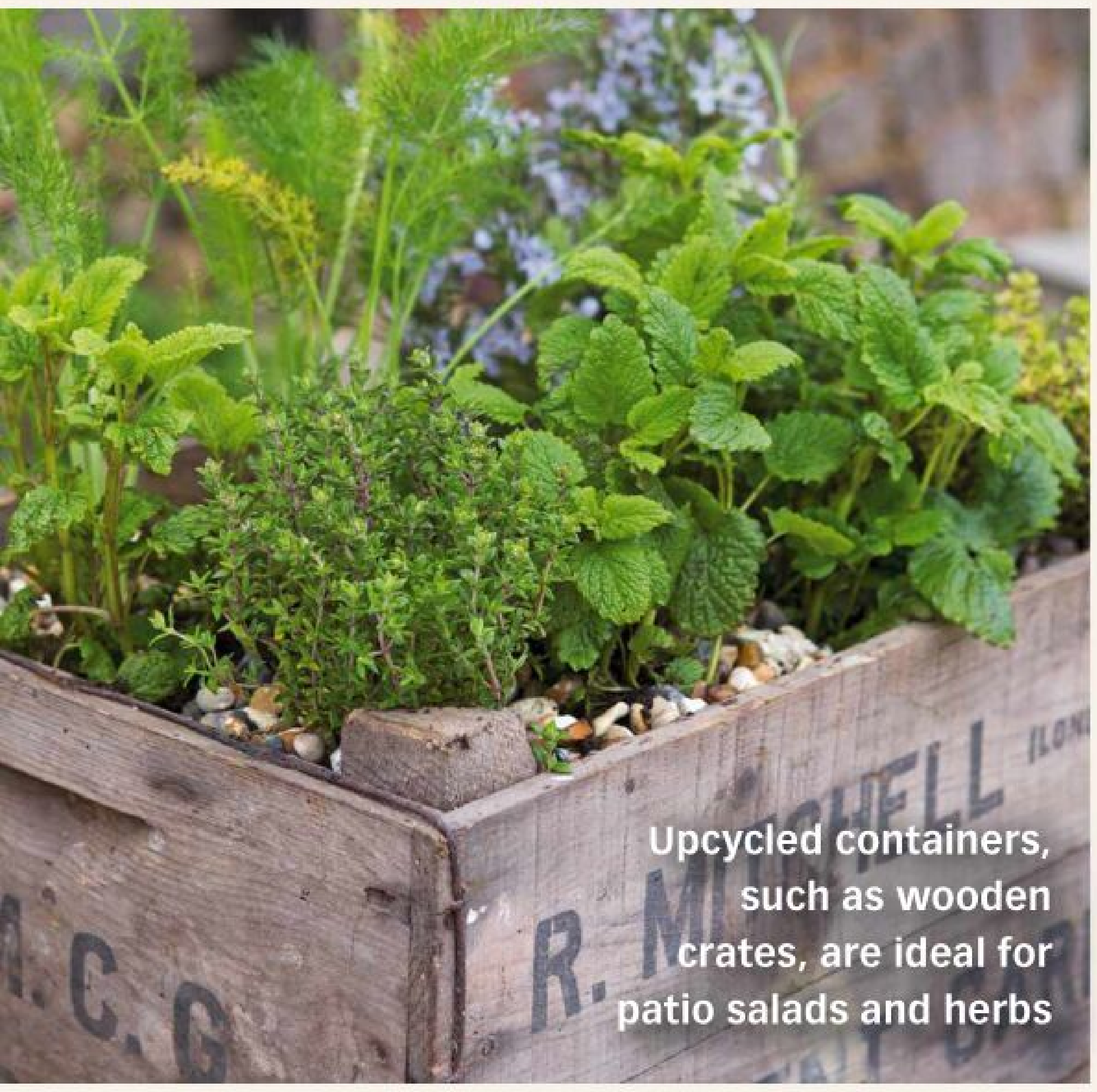






Stone-effect urns have timeless appeal in both traditional and modern gardens

Faux lead planters add a formal touch, at a more affordable price than the real thing



Upcycled containers, such as wooden crates, are ideal for patio salads and herbs

## Pick the perfect pot

Choose a material that suits your style and the place where the containers are to reside. It might seem boring to stick to one particular type, but be wary of using too many different materials. That can produce a scrappy effect, even though they may have cost you dearly!

### Terracotta

Clay containers help to keep roots cool and they look especially appropriate in cottage gardens or where you're growing herbs and Mediterranean plants. They vary in the shade of orange – from bright to pale and dusky. Check they are frost-proof (and note, frost-resistant doesn't mean frost-proof), otherwise they may crack and crumble in icy weather.

### Metal

Galvanised tubs and tanks look great filled with vegetables, fruit trees and spring bulbs such as tulips and daffodils. The galvanising will prolong their life but they may still start to deteriorate after five years or so. That said, I love them and they seem to suit almost any garden. Keep them off the ground on 'pot feet' to prolong their life, and bear in mind they can get hot in the summer.

### Stone troughs

Brilliant for alpine plants and ferns. Raise them up on stone or brick piers to give them most impact and be prepared to pay a considerable amount of money. Still, they'll last forever and be the envy of your friends. Just remember that they are extremely weighty.

### Glazed pots

Blue glazed pots were all the rage 20-odd years ago (they were a staple of *Ground Force*) but can look a bit passé now. Nevertheless, individual glazed pots can look dramatic when planted up with a single small tree. It's worth noting that if the neck of the pot is smaller than its waist, it'll be nigh on impossible to extract a mature tree or shrub from its confines without having to break the container.

### Wooden crates and wicker baskets

These look great filled with all manner of plants, but to make them last longer it's best to use them as 'cache pots' (outer covers), hiding simple plastic pots inside. If in direct contact with compost, they'll rot rapidly. I use circular wicker baskets as covers for large black plastic pots and bring the baskets indoors in winter.

### Polystone

A relatively new and long-lasting material, made from a mix of ground-up stone and recycled plastic. Available in many styles and shapes and hugely durable, they're generally good value and chic where a modern effect is required.

## ALAN'S TOP TIPS

### How long will it take?

Plants in containers require consistent upkeep. You'll need to water regularly in spring and summer (although you can install an automated watering system controlled by a timer fitted to an outdoor tap) and apply a liquid feed every week or so between June and September. Long-term plants in containers – trees, shrubs and perennials such as hostas (great in pots) – should be top-dressed with fresh compost each spring or repotted into larger containers as they grow.

### How do you save money?

Much depends on the containers you choose and their price tag. However, good containers will be durable and the only additional outlay will be the potting compost and liquid feed – and the plants of course. Cheaper containers may not last as long, but the initial cost will be much lower.

### What should I expect?

Containers are pretty labour-intensive as gardening goes, in that you'll need to pay attention to watering, feeding and repotting, as well as replanting if your containers are filled with seasonal displays. That said, they offer a degree of versatility unmatched by more permanent planting, and the ability to change your scheme as often as you want – seasonally as well as annually.

You can make new container displays quickly and easily, so it's a versatile way to garden

**ABOVE** Water and feed container plants regularly to keep them thriving **FAR RIGHT** Place a layer of grit on the compost surface to deter weeds

## CONTAINER CARE

Once you have successfully planted up your container, make sure you are giving the plants within it the correct care for long-term success.

Water containers thoroughly morning or evening, so that the compost is given a good soaking. Twice-daily watering may be needed in the height of summer if the weather is especially warm and dry. Set up an automatic irrigation system if you're unlikely to find the time to water regularly.

Give all plants in containers a dilute liquid feed every week or ten days from June to September. Organic tomato feed is good for anything that flowers or fruits.

Protect any pots that aren't frost-proof by wrapping them in bubble polythene over winter or moving them close to the house wall.

When plants outgrow their containers, move them into larger pots in spring rather than summer or autumn. Once shrubs or trees outgrow your largest container, recognise that it's time to move them into the ground or, if you have no available space, give them away.

Move pots or wrap them in bubble wrap to prevent frost damage

## Alan's planting basics

- **Check your container drains well** – it must have one or more drainage holes in the base that are large enough to allow excess water to escape. Keep the holes from getting blocked with compost by adding a couple of inches of gravel in the base of the container. Avoid using other materials, which can block the holes.

- **Avoid using garden soil in containers** – it won't drain well enough and may contain pests. Instead use peat-free multi-purpose compost for temporary (seasonal) plantings and a mixture of this and soil-based John Innes No.2 potting compost for plants that will stay in the container for longer than a year.

- **Give plants a through watering** both before and after planting. Then continue watering regularly throughout the growing season.

- **Position plants** at the same depth they were growing previously. With shrubs and trees, ensure the soil mark on the stem is level with the surface of the compost.

- **Leave a gap** between the surface of the compost and the rim of the pot to allow for watering – at least 5cm in large containers.

- **Raise the pot off the ground** on bricks or pot feet to ensure water drains out easily, especially in winter. This will also prolong the life of containers made from perishable materials such as wood.

- **Choose whether to add a mulch** – a topping of gravel looks very attractive, but can also make it a bit more difficult to see if the plants need watering.

- **Keep long-term plantings thriving** by replacing the uppermost 5cm of compost each spring. Adding a good handful of blood, fish and bonemeal will give them a boost, too.

**LISTEN** to Alan talking about how to attract wildlife, gardening with kids and growing food. Also check out Alan's Tea-Break Tutorials podcast series in the new Premium area for subscribers.

All available at **GardenersWorld.com/podcast**

**NEXT MONTH** Alan looks at how to get your plants and garden prepared for winter

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; JASON INGRAM

# SPRING TULIP COLLECTIONS

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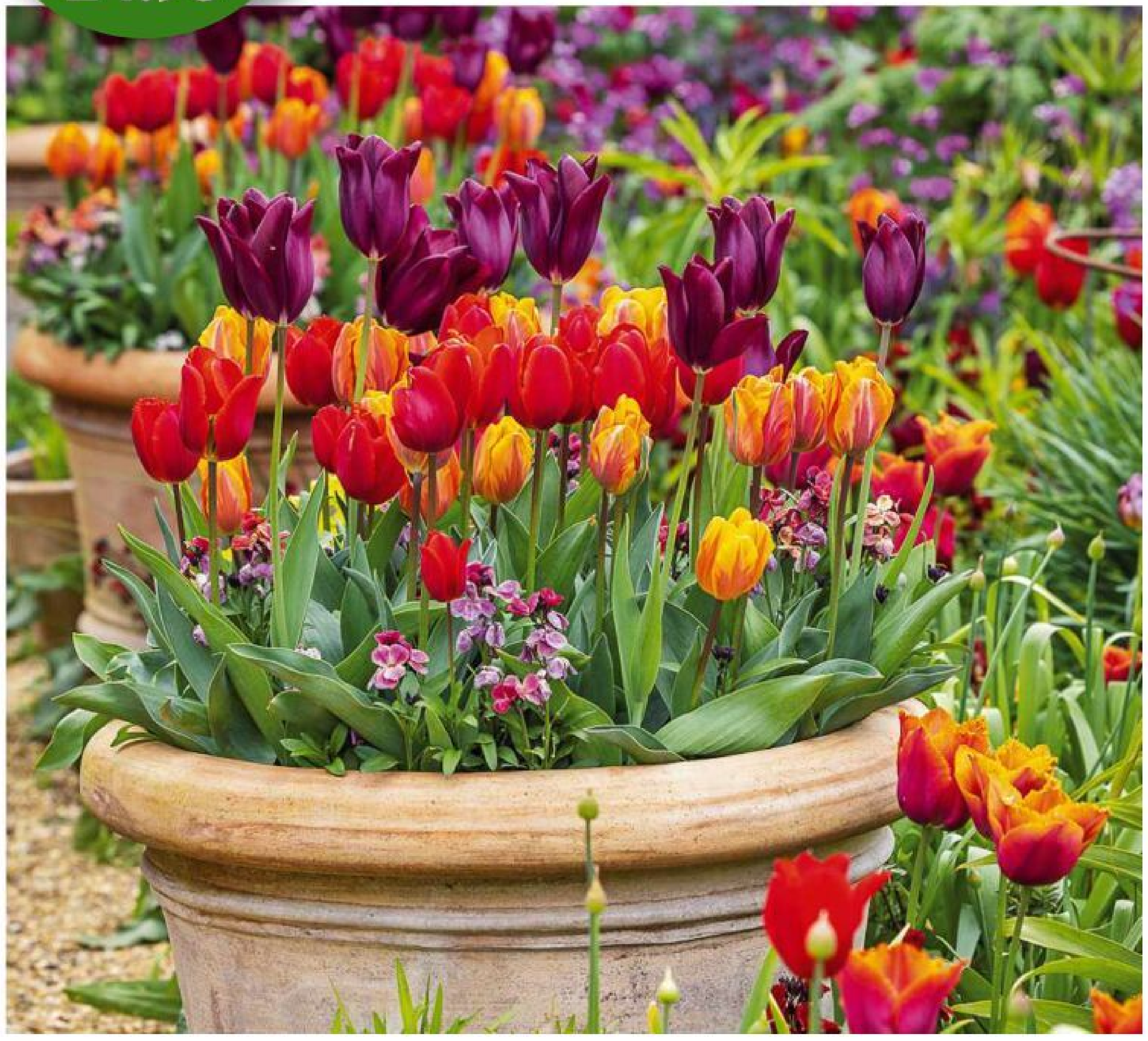
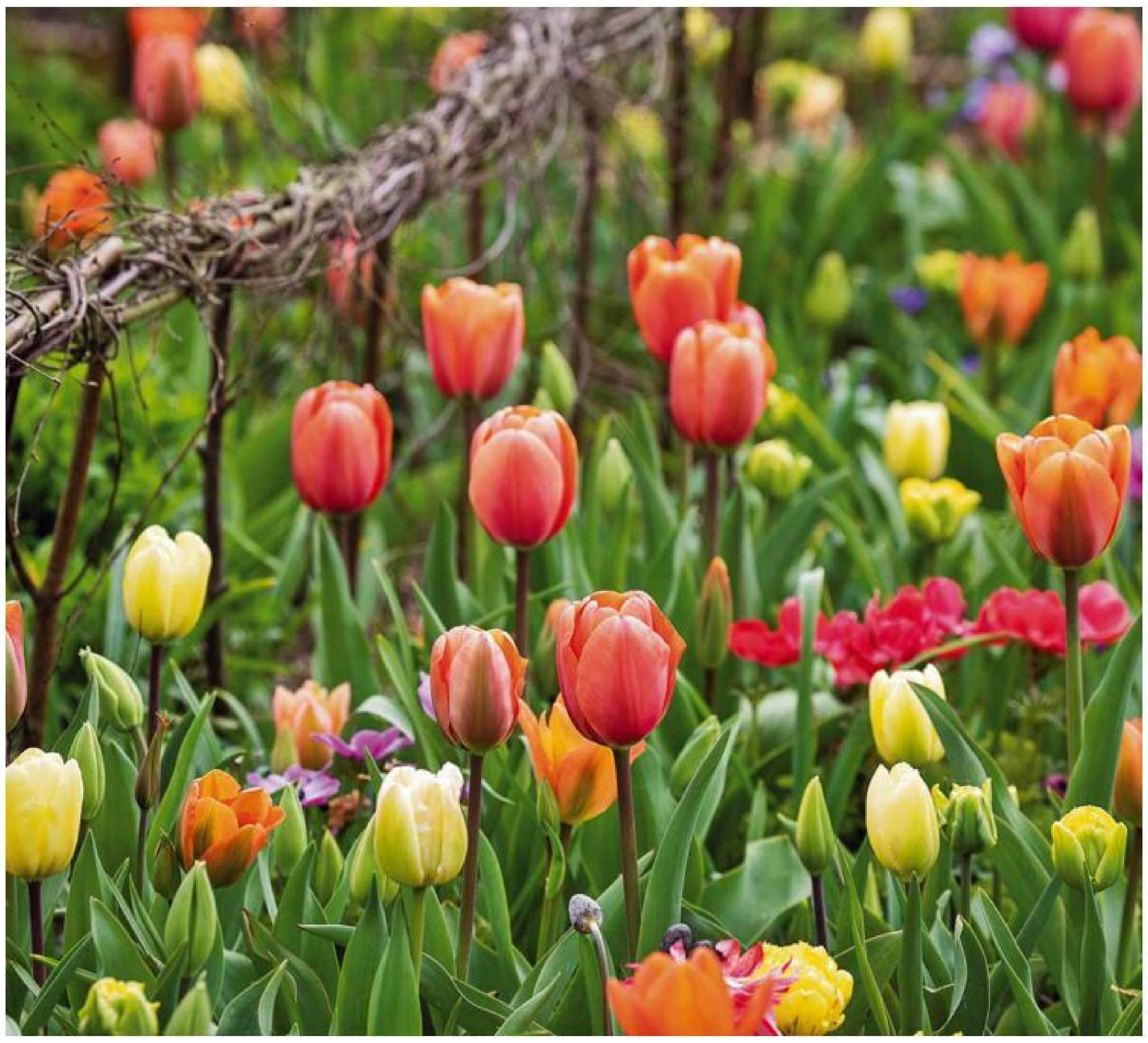
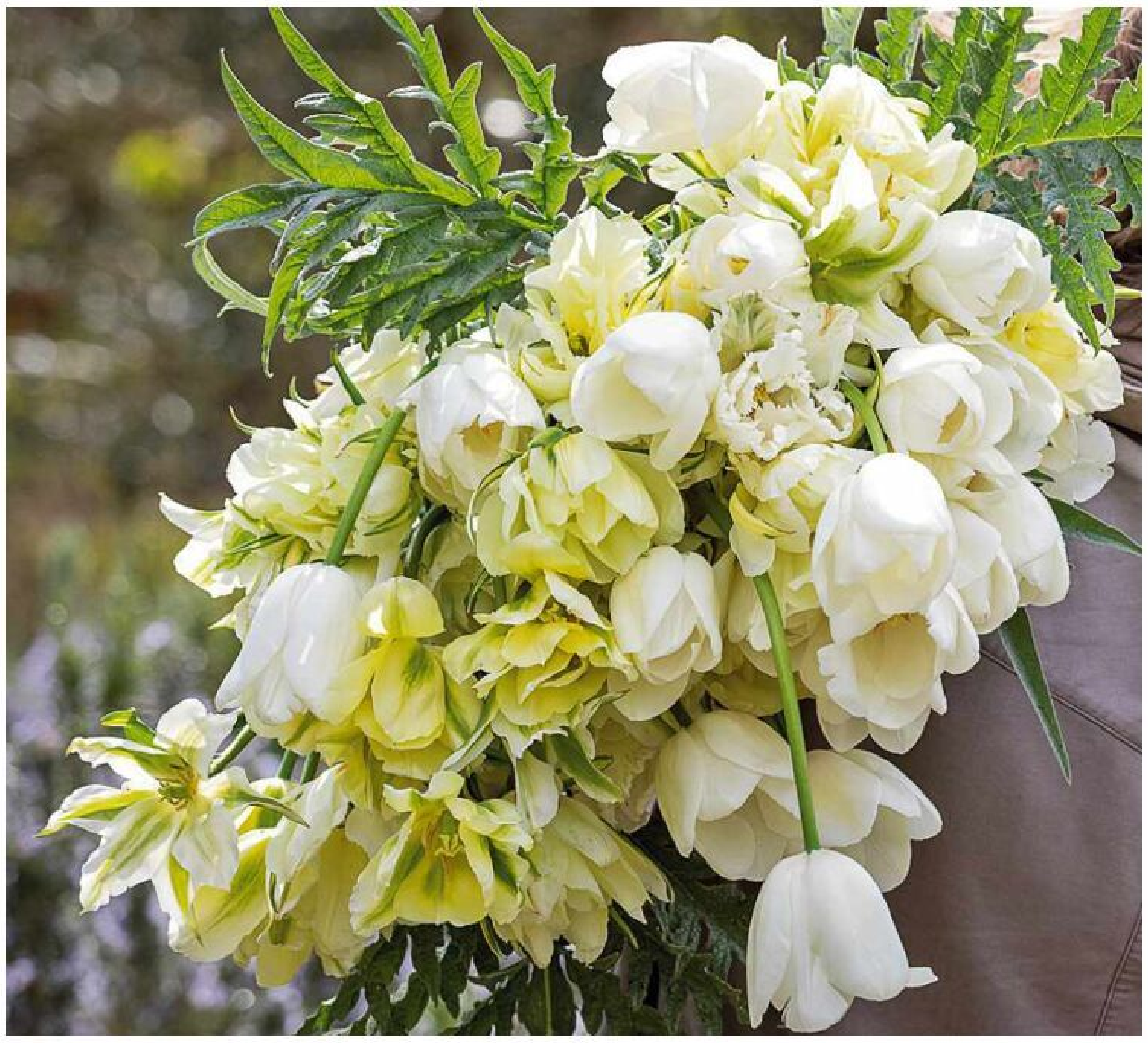
**Bring bold spring colour to pots and borders with Sarah Raven's specially selected tulip collections – all with FREE P&P, worth £4.95**



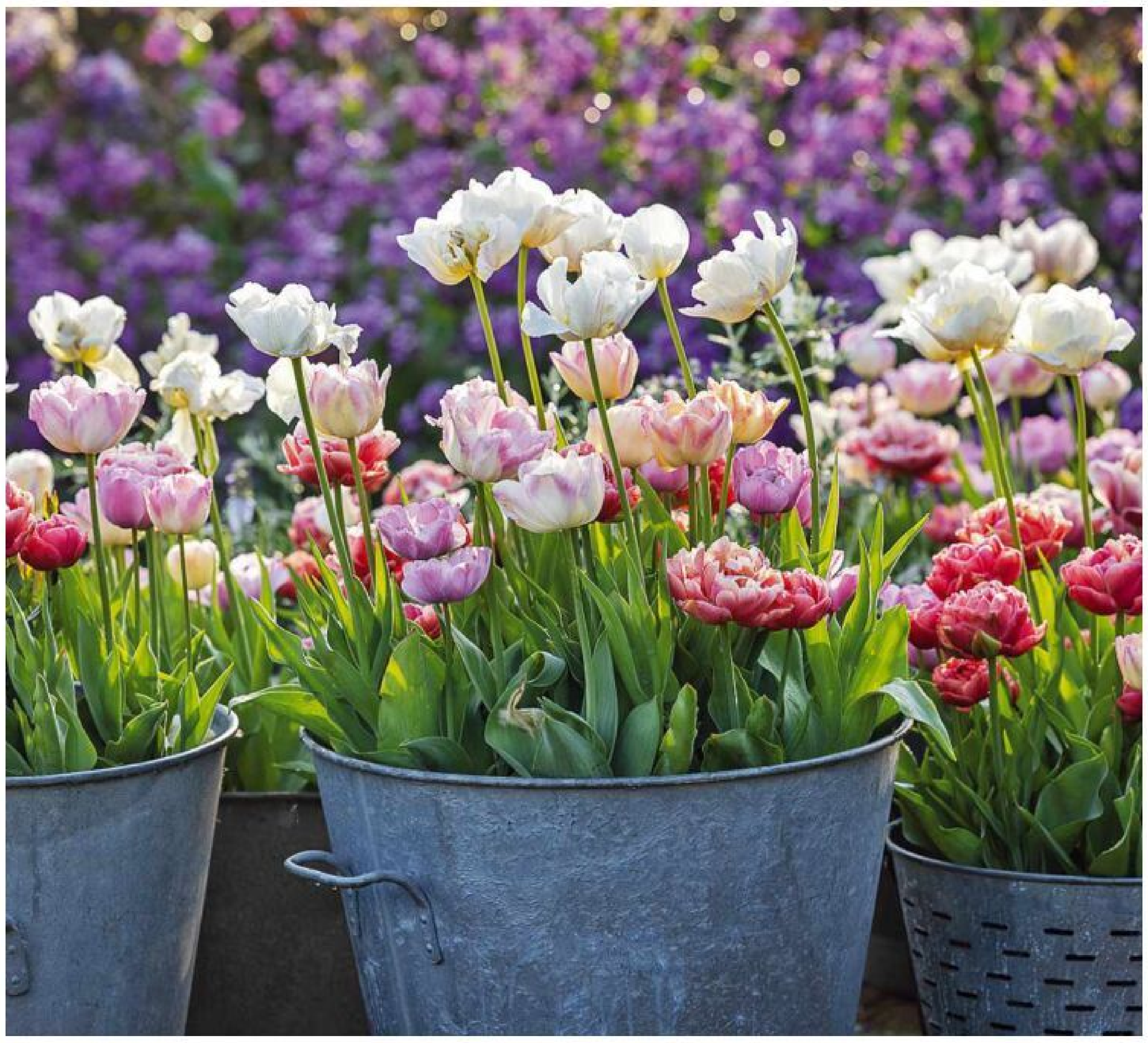
■ **Venetian Tulip Collection**
One of Sarah Raven's best-ever collections, filled with richly coloured single earlies: 'Couleur Cardinal', 'Havran' and 'Prinses Irene'. *(260319)*
**Height x Spread** 30-45cm x 10cm **Flowers** Apr-May
45 bulbs **£28.95** 90 bulbs **£47.50**



■ **Sweetie Shop Tulip Collection**
Huge goblet-shaped flowers on tall stems. Includes: 'Apricot Impression', 'Apricot Emperor', 'Apricona', 'Apricot Pride' and 'Cheers' *(261576)*
**H x S** 45cm x 10cm **F** Apr-May
50 bulbs **£34.95** 75 bulbs **£49.95**



■ **Swan Lake Tulip Collection**
Makes an incredible indoor display. Includes 'White Valley', 'Green Star', 'Spring Green', 'Purissima', 'Green Spirit', 'Clearwater', 'Super Parrot' and 'Francoise' *(261459)* **H x S** 35-60cm x 10cm **F** Apr-May
40 bulbs **£39.95** 80 bulbs **£59.95**



■ **Rose Bowl Tulip Collection**
Looking more like June roses than tulips, these are full, frilly and fragrant. 'Silk Road', 'Crème Upstar', 'Pink Star' and 'Copper Image'. *(261569)*
**H x S** 35-45cm x 10cm **F** Apr-May
20 bulbs **£19.95** 40 bulbs **£29.95**

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# A French tradition

Whether you're visiting vineyards or bringing the magic of France to your own back garden, the great outdoors is the perfect place to **taste the love** with LU biscuits

Every summer, many of us are keen to get outside and soak up the sunshine while it lasts. And whether you enjoy a beach trip or afternoon tea in the garden, you'll often find that sunny days feel that bit sunnier when they're spent with the people you love.

Like many family businesses, LU biscuits bloomed from these special moments of togetherness. It began in 1846 with the union of two young bakers, Jean-Romain Lefèvre and Pauline-Isabelle Utile, who brought their initials together to create the iconic brand. Now, more than 170 years later, LU's biscuits are still baked with a combination of simple ingredients and authentic French passion.

Though you may associate them with French holidays, LU recently launched a range of biscuits here in the UK. It includes Le Petit Beurre, which takes inspiration from the first ever LU biscuit, the Véritable Petit Beurre, to offer a wonderfully buttery flavour with a hint of salt. There's also Le Petit Chocolat, which combines a butter biscuit with a layer of indulgent milk chocolate.

Here are a few other ways that you can channel some of that French passion into your love of the outdoors.

## Get a taste of the countryside with a vineyard tour

It turns out you don't always have to fly to France to soak up the picturesque views of a sunny vineyard. British wine has come a long way in recent years and there are now a number of award-winning wineries across the UK, producing a wide range of sparkling and still wines. Plus, there are plenty of ways to enjoy them, from classic tastings and tours to gourmet picnics and vine leasing schemes. Some even have restaurants where the wine is paired with locally sourced food and a side of breath-taking views. Many of England's vineyards are located in the southeast, including the Kent Downs, an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty', which has a chalky terroir very similar to that of Champagne.

## Dry out your lavender to make Herbes de Provence

Great for both French and Mediterranean cooking, Herbes de Provence is an aromatic mixture of dried Provençal herbs, which traditionally includes thyme, basil, rosemary, tarragon, savory, marjoram and oregano. Naturally, you'll probably associate Provence with its rolling lavender fields, which is why this herb blend often also includes dried lavender flowers. If you have fresh lavender to hand, you can hang it in bunches to dry, or simply place it in an oven or food dehydrator, along with any other fresh herbs from your garden that would work in this blend. Herbes de Provence is great for elevating a range of simple dishes, including chicken, grilled fish and ratatouille.

### Enjoy Le Goûter with a loved one and LU biscuits

Like British afternoon tea, Le Goûter is the French tradition of sharing a snack in the afternoon. This year, LU is challenging the nation to turn their afternoon lulls into afternoon LUs. A small gathering in the garden is the perfect way to enjoy Le Goûter, and a simple spread of your favourite crockery on a classic gingham tablecloth is an easy way to impress guests. After that, you'll just need to fill a couple of cake stands with your favourite LU biscuits. The classic butteriness of Le Petit Beurre makes it great for dunking, while the chocolate layer on Le Petit Chocolat melts to create the perfect mouthful.

LU
Le Petit Chocolat
Milk Chocolate

LU
Le Petit Beurre
Biscuits with butter & a hint of salt
3

### Visit a French-inspired formal garden

Often when you think of a classic French garden, the first thing that comes to mind is a perfect swirl of geometric greenery, like the gardens of Versailles. But did you know that these French formal gardens have also inspired some of our own outdoor spaces here in the UK? For instance, The Parterre at Oxburgh Hall in Norfolk was created in 1848 when a member of the Bedingfeld family supposedly visited a parterre garden in France and wanted to recreate it at Oxburgh. Today, it features a colourful arrangement of more than 6,500 bedding plants that bloom into an unmissable floral display every summer.

### Elevate your outdoor space with rustic French touches

At the opposite end of the French garden scale, you have the more rural image of a country plot. This can be a great source of inspiration if you want to add a warm, rustic feel to your outdoor space. Think antique metal watering cans, weathered stone garden sculptures and Anduze planters, handmade using traditional pottery techniques in the south of France. A French bistro-style table and chairs also makes an elegant addition to any lawn, patio or balcony.

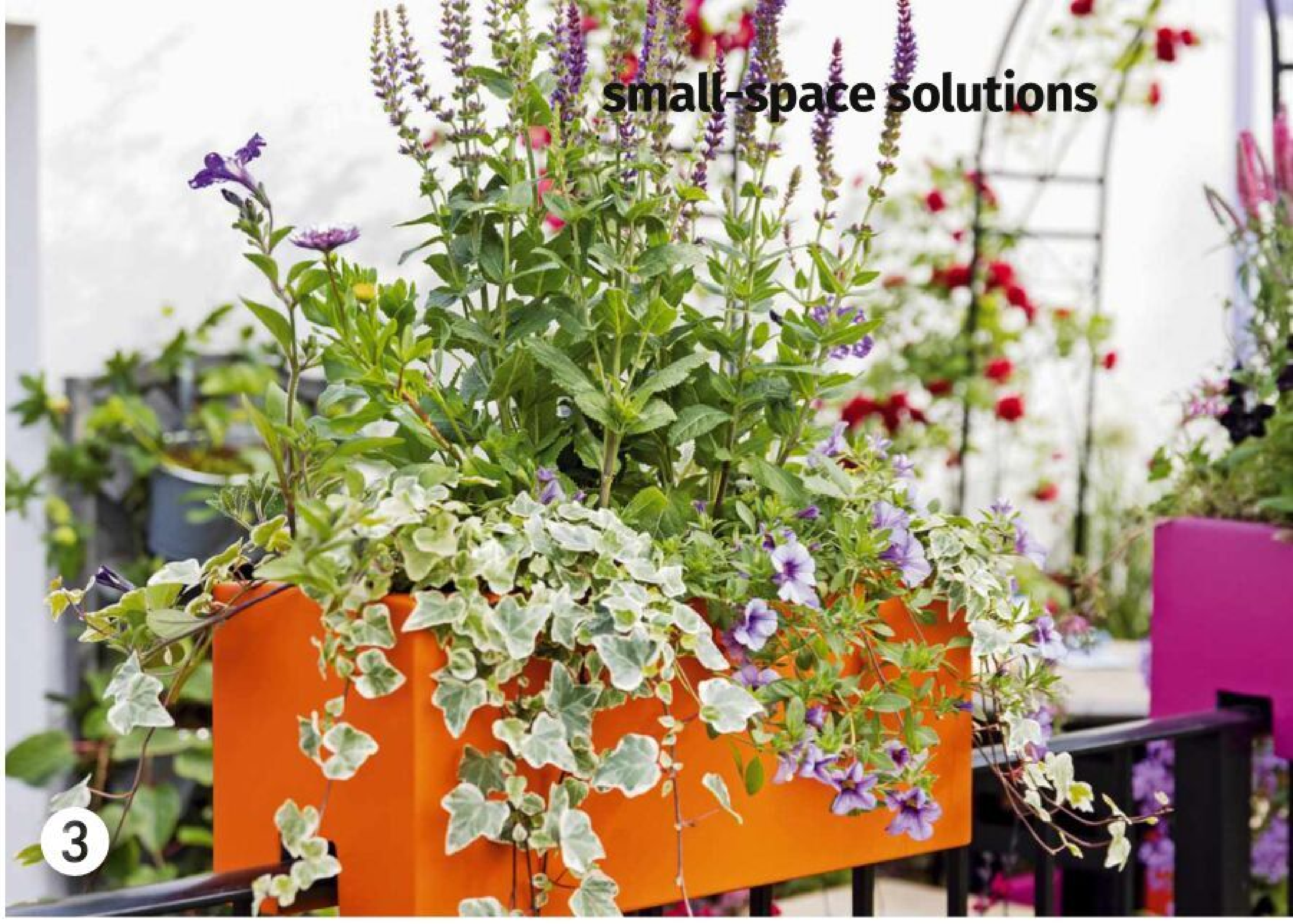
To find out more and **#TasteTheLove**, visit **lubakery.co.uk**
or follow **@LU.UKandI** on Facebook and Instagram

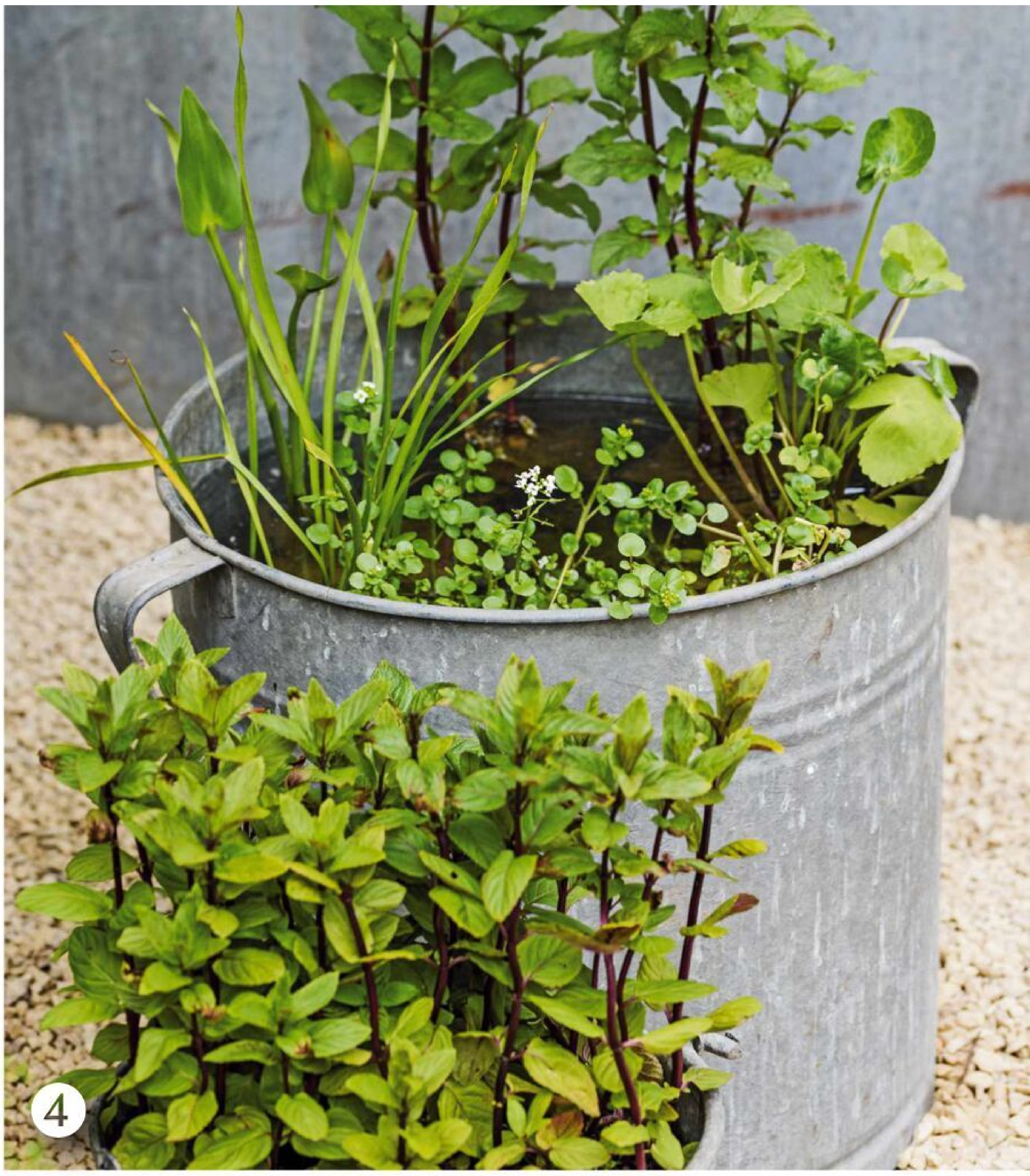
LU
Créateur de biscuits depuis 1846

# Designer style for tiny spaces

Small-space solutions aren't the first things that spring to mind when you think of the world's grandest flower show, but Chelsea 2022 was packed with ideas for tiny plots. We scoured the show for the best, finding clever ideas for containers, seating, water, homegrown crops and more.

Here are our favourites, all proving that high-end design can have a place in any garden – even if space and budget are in short supply. Many of the ideas were spotted in the gardens of first-time Chelsea designers, showing that the rising stars of tomorrow are in tune with the everyday challenges of today. So, read on and soak up the latest designer inspo that could transform your small space.





## Bite-sized design

Chelsea was packed with creatively planted containers, all showing that it's possible to plant the perfect pot for any style of garden.

**1 Got shade?** No problem. Here weathered stone troughs are filled with ferns of all shapes, along with hostas and brunnera, to perk up any gloomy corner. The climbing star jasmine adds fragrance too.

**2 Create a complete garden in pots** – roses, peonies, grasses and even small trees (such as acers) can all be grown in containers, then rearranged or changed with ease.

**3 Brighten balcony railings** with a vibrant planter filled with flowers in a contrasting hue. Combining tall plants with trailers gives maximum colour and impact.

**4 Upcycle a galvanised tub** to make a rustic container pond. Planted with a selection of compact marginals, it's just the thing to attract wildlife into a small space.

PHOTOS: PAUL DEBOIS; JASON INGRAM
GARDEN DESIGNERS (1-4): BEA TANN; NIKKI HOLLIER;
JASON WILLIAMS; ANN TRENEMAN

## Fresh from the pot

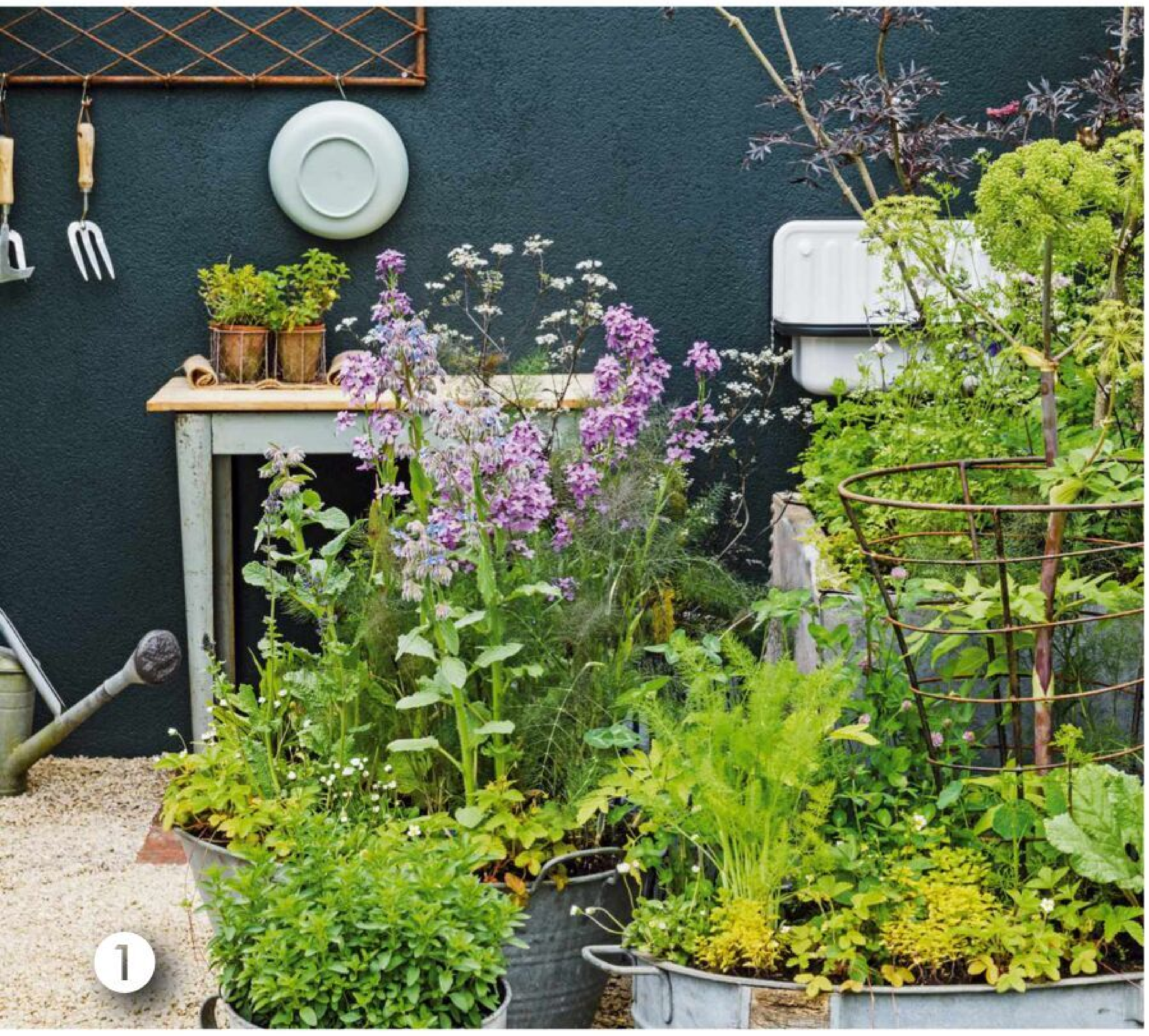
You can feast on delicious homegrown harvests no matter how compact your plot – these space-saving ideas caught our eye…

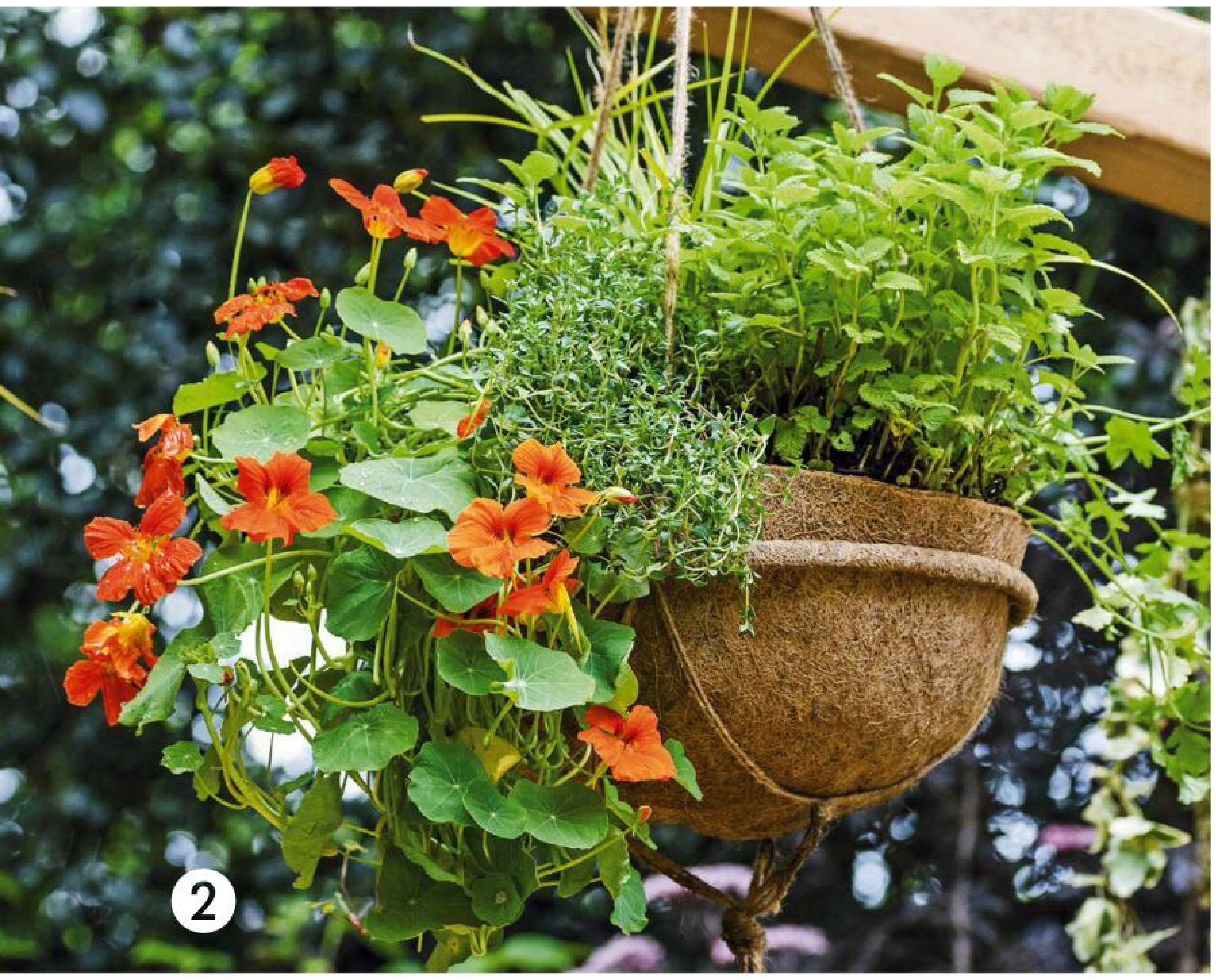
**1 This complete herb garden** is growing entirely in recycled containers. Pretty, practical and productive, it's perfect for back-door pickings.

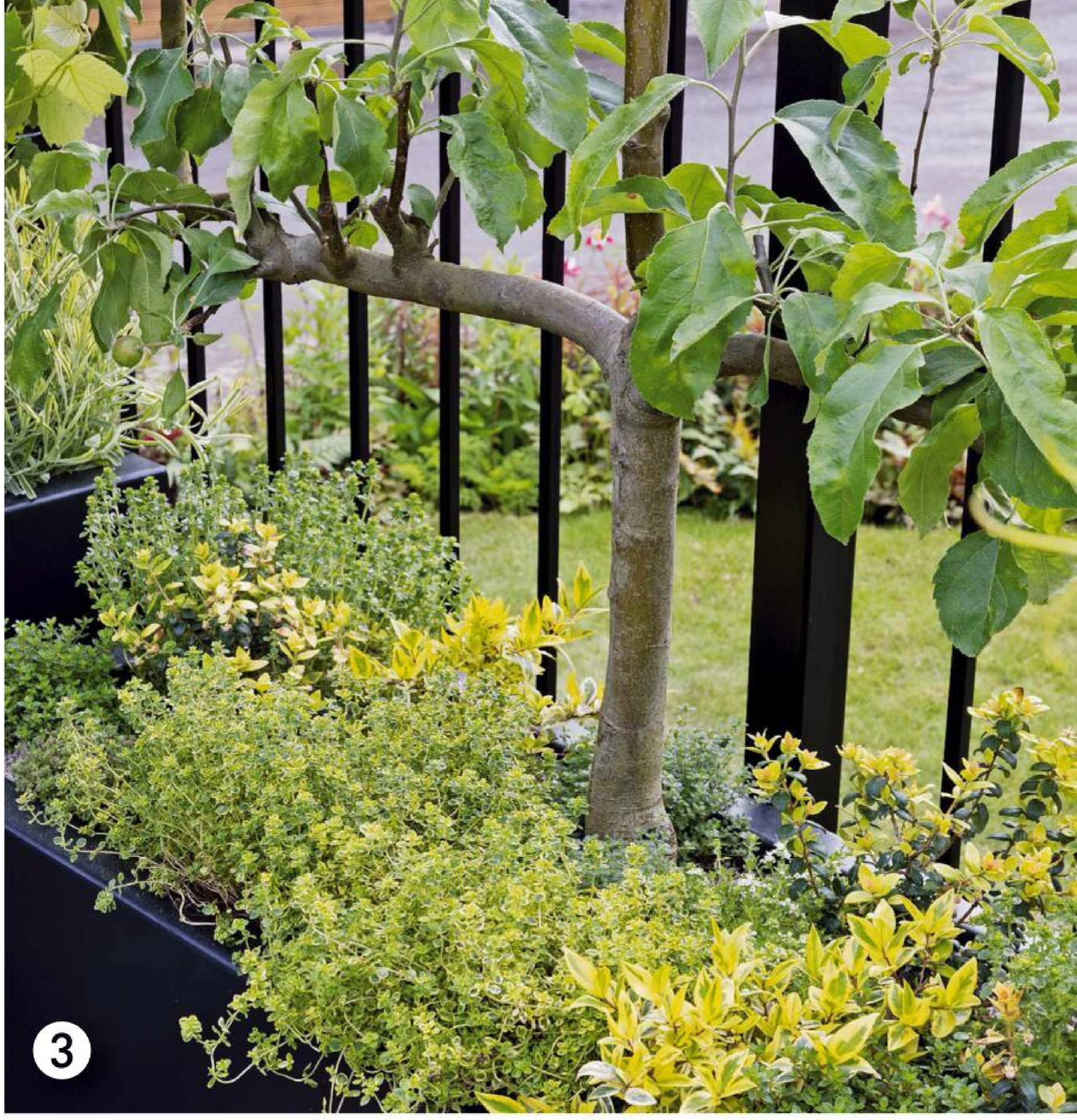
**2 A hanging basket** is ideal if you're short on ground space. This one overflows with herbs and a trailing nasturtium, offering leafy pickings and edible flowers.

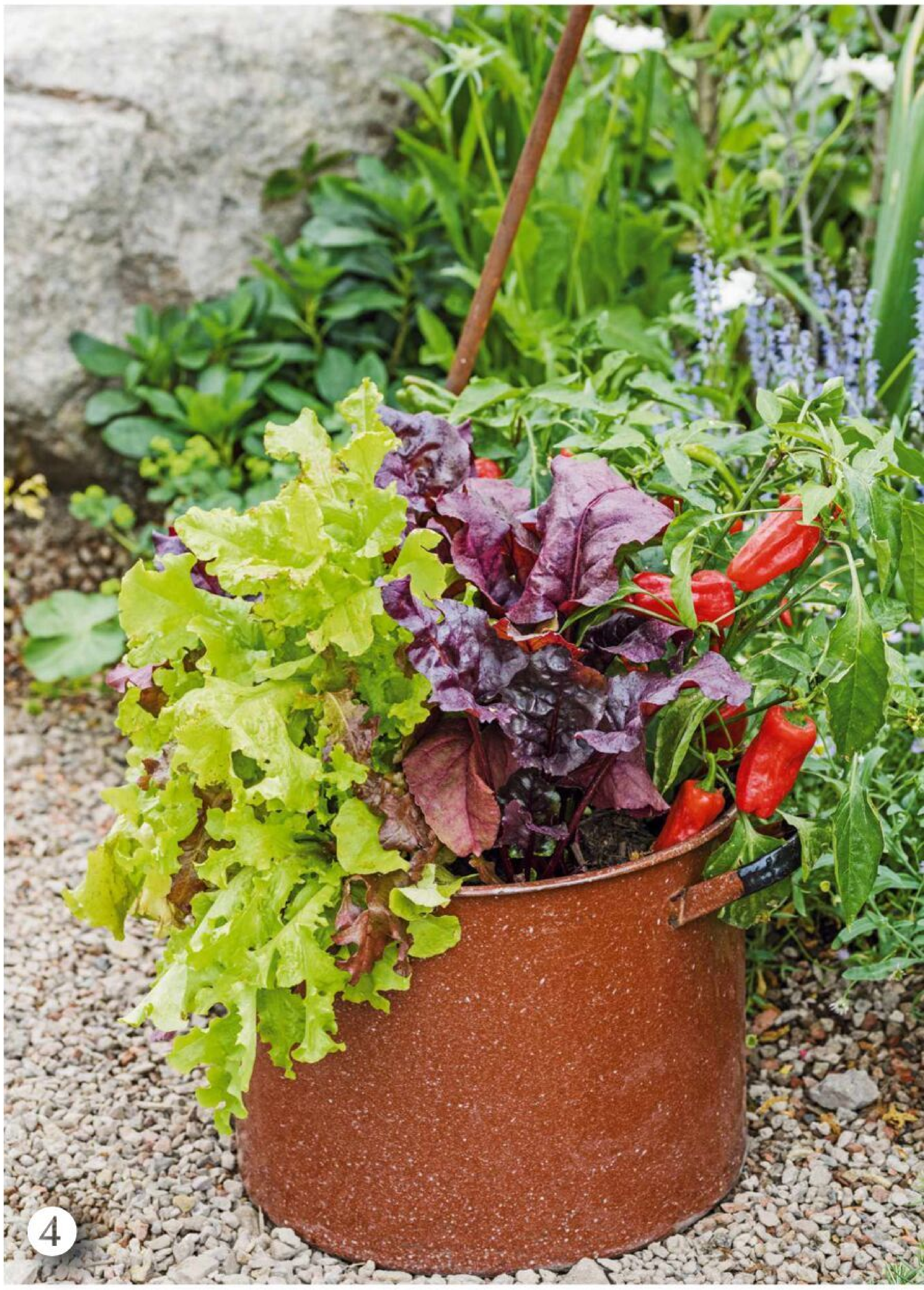
**3 Enjoy fresh fruit** on a balcony with a compact stepover apple tree. Use soil-based compost for permanent plantings like this and underplant with evergreen herbs.

**4 Salad leaves** are quick and easy to grow and will save you forking out for shop-bought bags. Combine them with chillies to create a vibrant container for a sunny spot.









# Take a seat

To really enjoy your outdoor space, you need to be able to sit and relax – here are some neat suggestions that will suit even the smallest site.

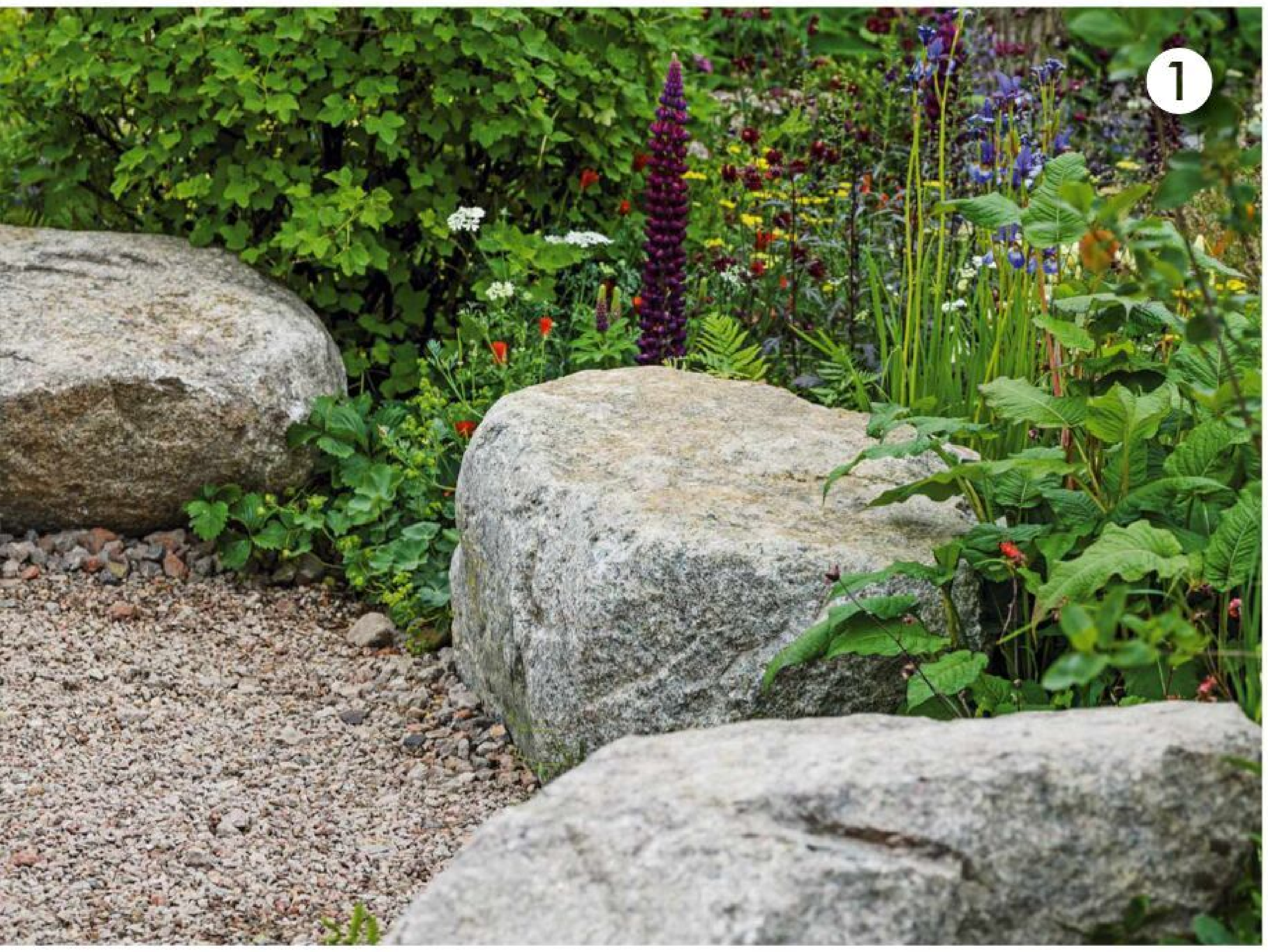
**1 You don't need furniture** to have somewhere to sit. These dual-purpose boulders define the edge of a border, while providing a valuable place to perch too.

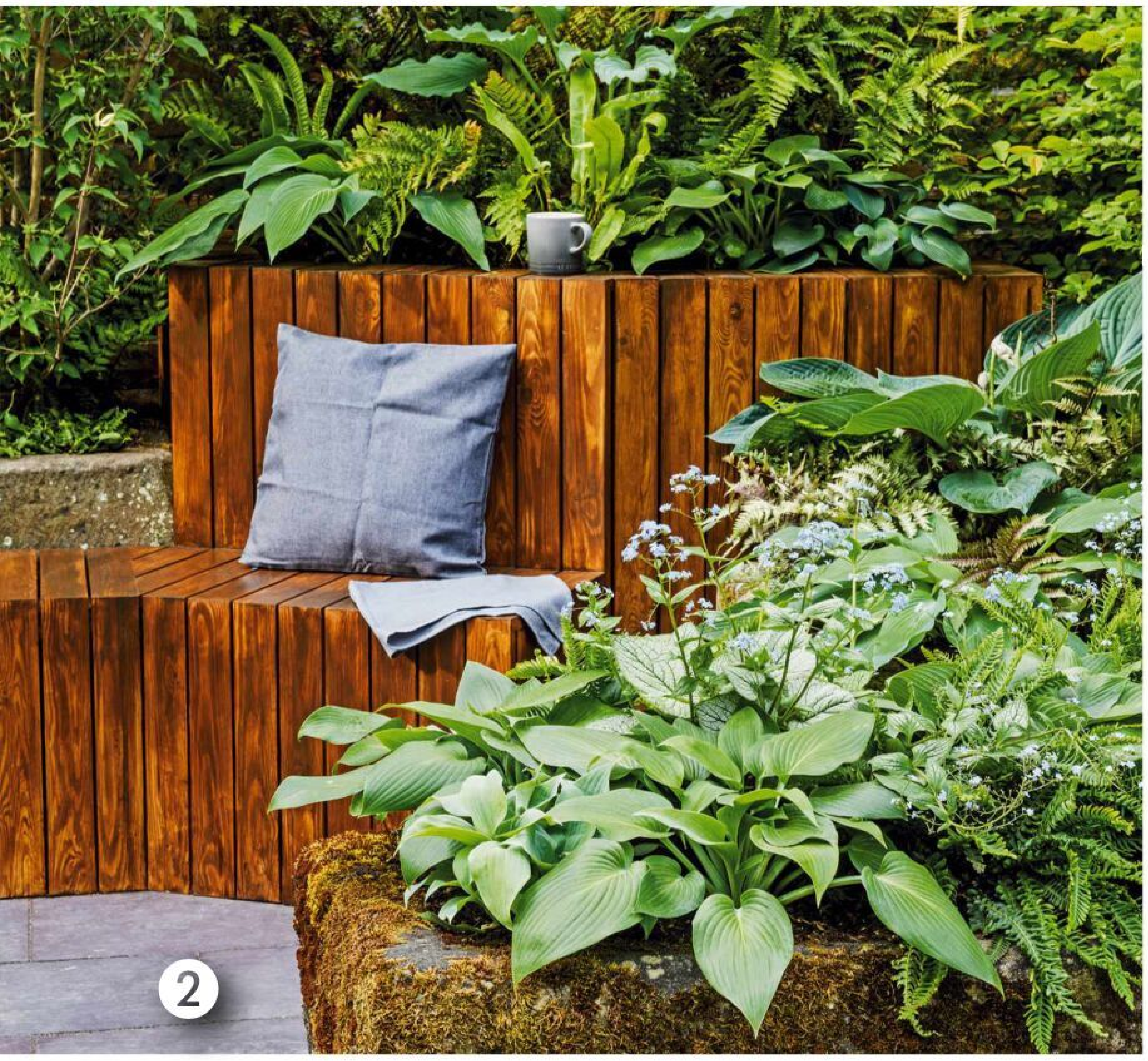
**2 Built-in seating** is a great space-saving option. Benches like this not only double up as storage boxes, but can also provide raised planting areas.

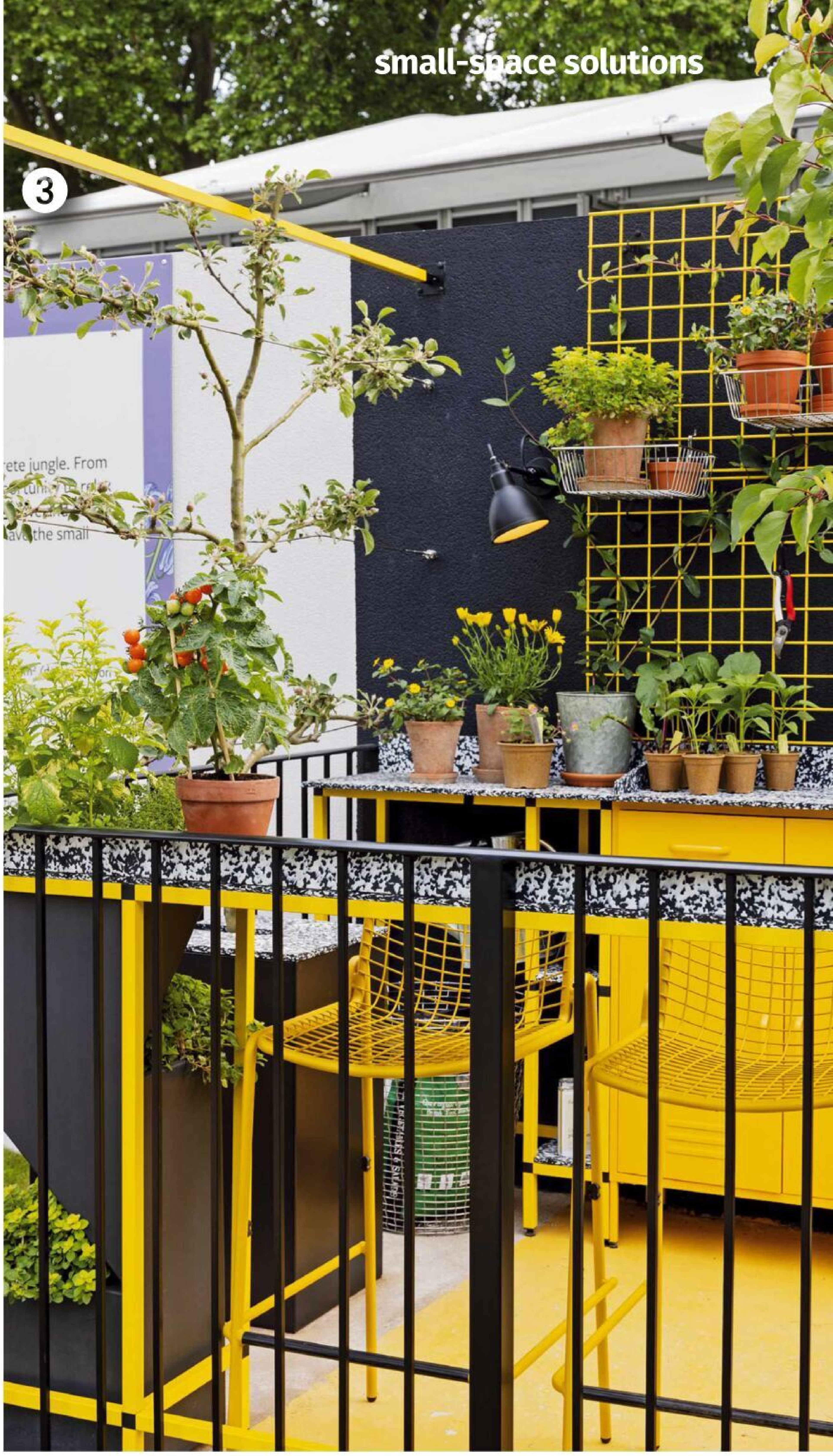
**3 Add a shelf** to your balcony railings and team with vibrant bar stools. You'll create a compact seating and eating spot, where you can relax and enjoy the view.

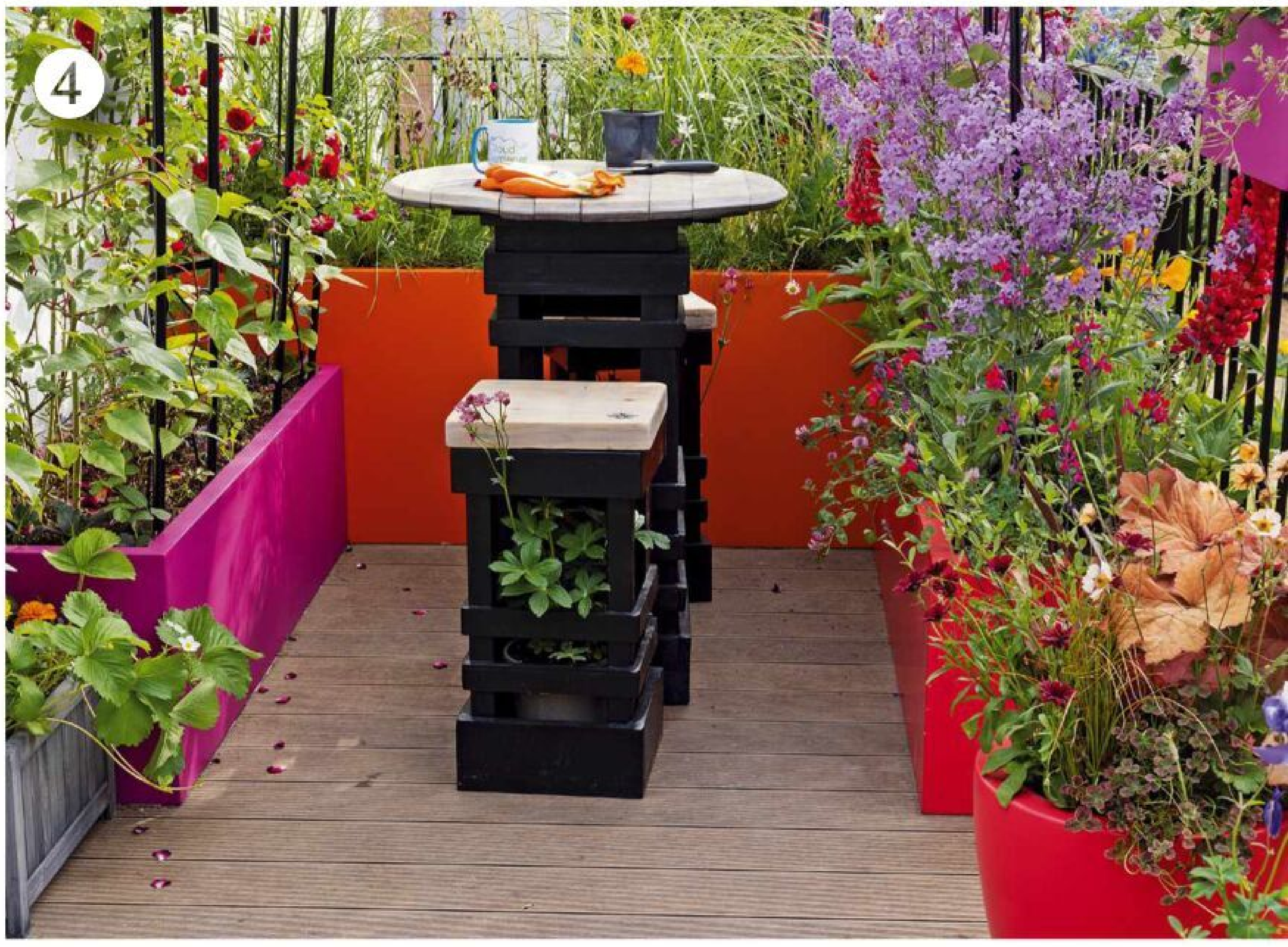
**4 Use recycled timber** to create bespoke seating to fit any tiny space. This slimline table and stools provides an intimate place for two to dine al fresco.

PHOTOS: PAUL DEBOIS; JASON INGRAM. GARDEN DESIGNERS (1-4) PAGE 52: ANN TRENEMAN; HIRO YOSHIHIRO TAMURA; WILLIAM MURRAY; GROW2KNOW; PAGE 53: GROW2KNOW; BEA TANN; WILLIAM MURRAY; JASON WILLIAMS









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GWHY

# Raise your game

No soil? Raised beds are the answer. Perfect for small plots, they can be built to any size, to give you the growing space your crave.

PHOTOS: JASON INGRAM
GARDEN DESIGNERS (1-3): MALLORCA GARDEN DESIGN; TOM WILKES-RIOS; AMANDA WARING

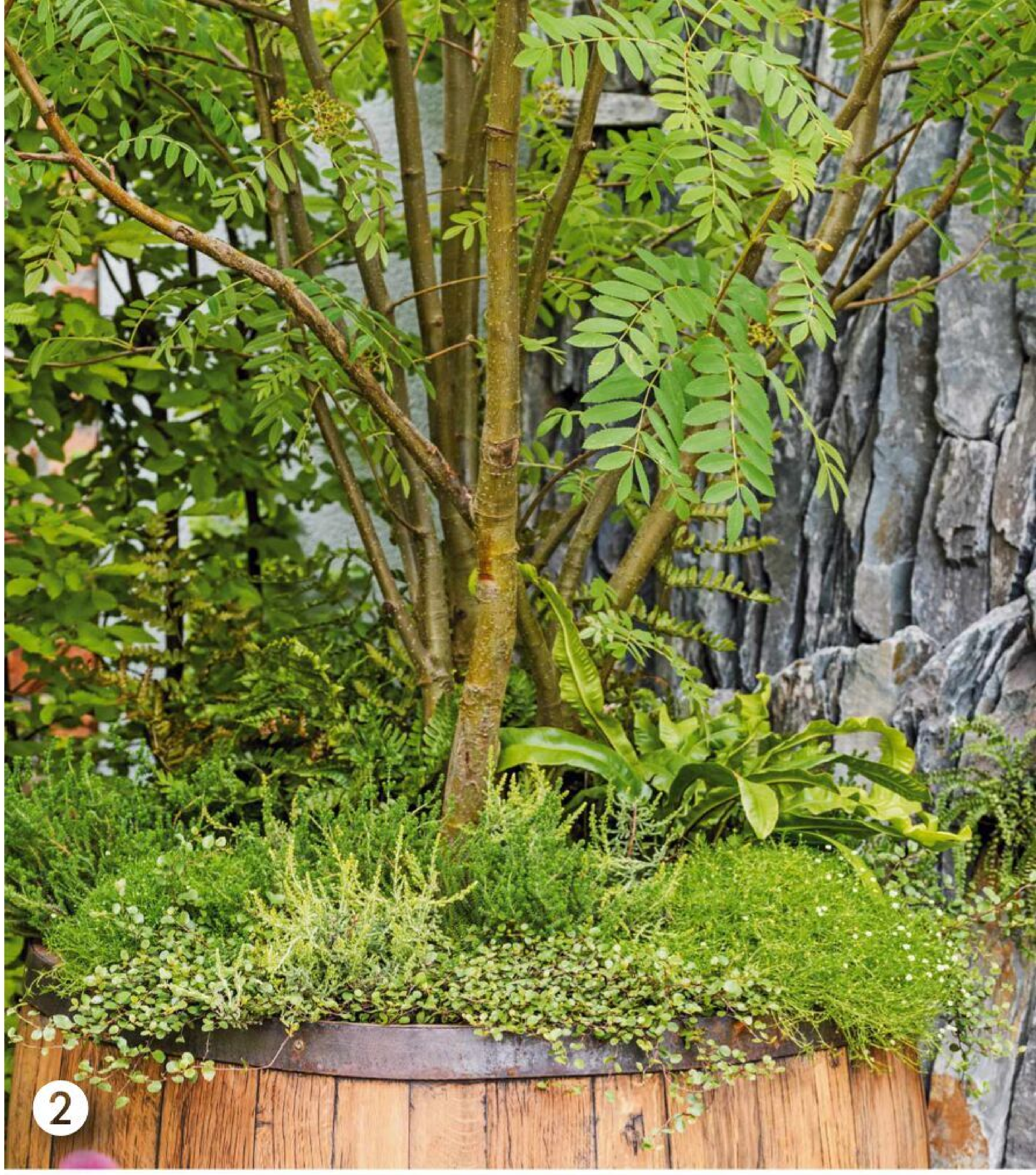
**1 A sun-baked spot** is ideal for a Mediterranean-style raised bed. Work in plenty of grit to the soil to create a free-draining mix, and plant with silver-leaved plants, Mexican fleabane and sun-loving herbs such as trailing rosemary.
**2 Bring a pop of colour** to a small space by painting rendered beds and walls in contrasting hues to inject vibrant energy. Bold planting in shades of green completes the look.
**3 Get a high-end look** at a low cost by transforming traditional timber raised beds with a lick of bright paint. Adding a copper rim updates the look and can also help to deter slugs.

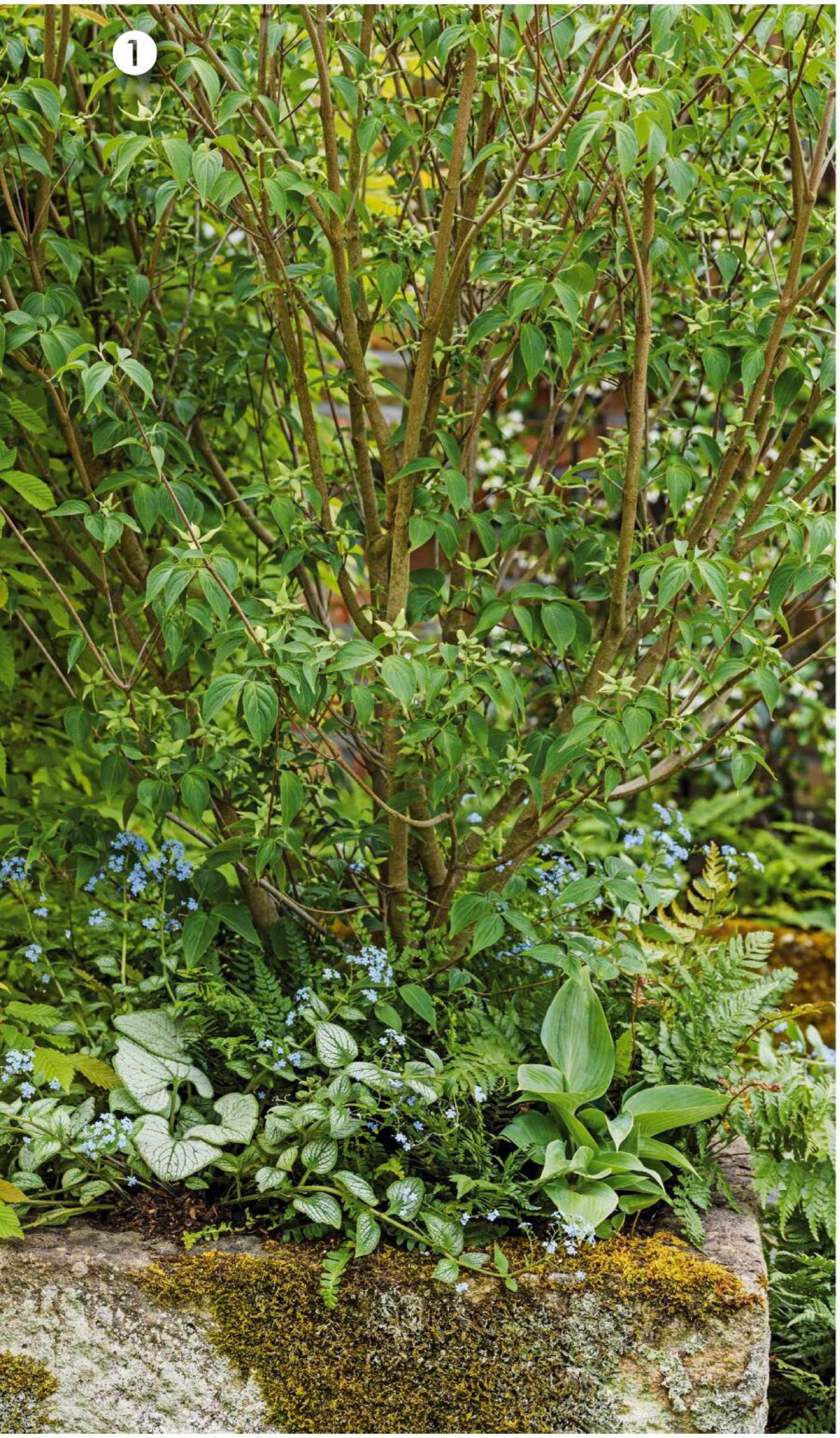
## Time for trees

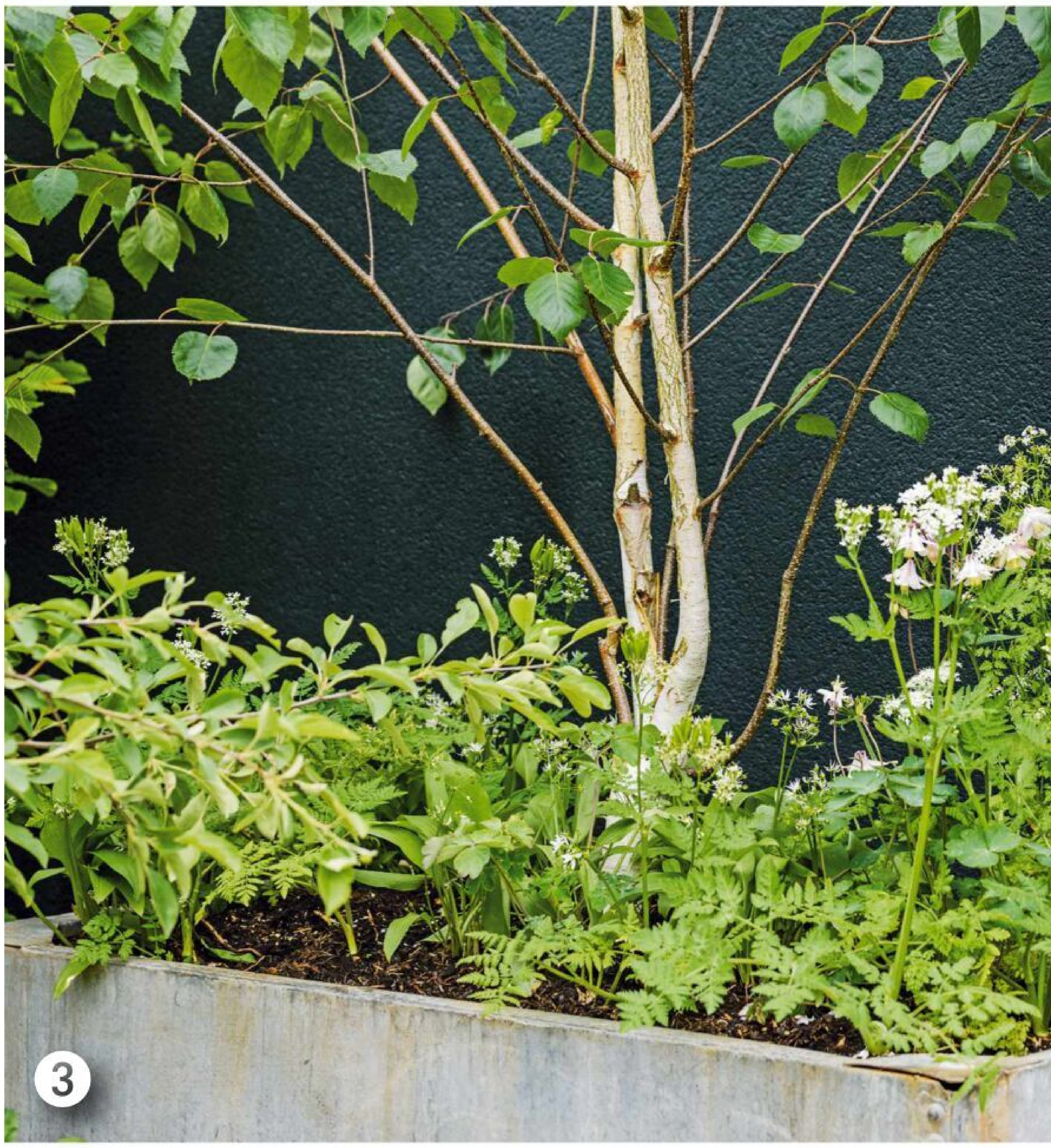
Every garden should have at least one tree, and we spotted lots of ways to plant them in containers – ideal for small spaces.

PHOTOS: JASON INGRAM
GARDEN DESIGNERS (1-3): BEA TANN; JANE PORTER; ANN TRENEMAN

**1 A multi-stemmed *Cornus kousa*** gives interest across the season (spring flowers, berries and autumn leaf colour), making this dogwood an ideal choice if you only have room for one tree. Here it's underplanted with shade lovers.
**2 This huge wooden barrel** gives extra height to a beautiful rowan tree – great for creating shelter and privacy in a small garden. The rowan berries will provide a feast for birds in autumn.
**3 The pale trunk** of this silver birch creates bold impact set against a dark wall. Look for other bark and stem colours too when choosing plants. The galvanised container brings a modern, industrial feel to the space.







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■ ***Crocus* 'Barr's Purple' x 15** Purple flowers with orange stamens. **F** Feb-Mar **H x S** 20cm x 5cm

■ ***Muscari* x 30** Grape hyacinth with clusters of purple-blue flowers. **F** Mar-May **H x S** 15cm x 8cm

■ ***Ipheion uniflorum* x 80** Star-shaped, silvery blue, scented flowers. **F** Mar-May **H x S** 25cm x 15cm

■ ***Allium neapolitanum* x 50** Pure white flowerheads. **F** Apr-May **H x S** 40cm x 25cm

■ ***Allium moly* x 80** Clusters of bright yellow flowers. **F** May-Jun **H x S** 50cm x 25cm

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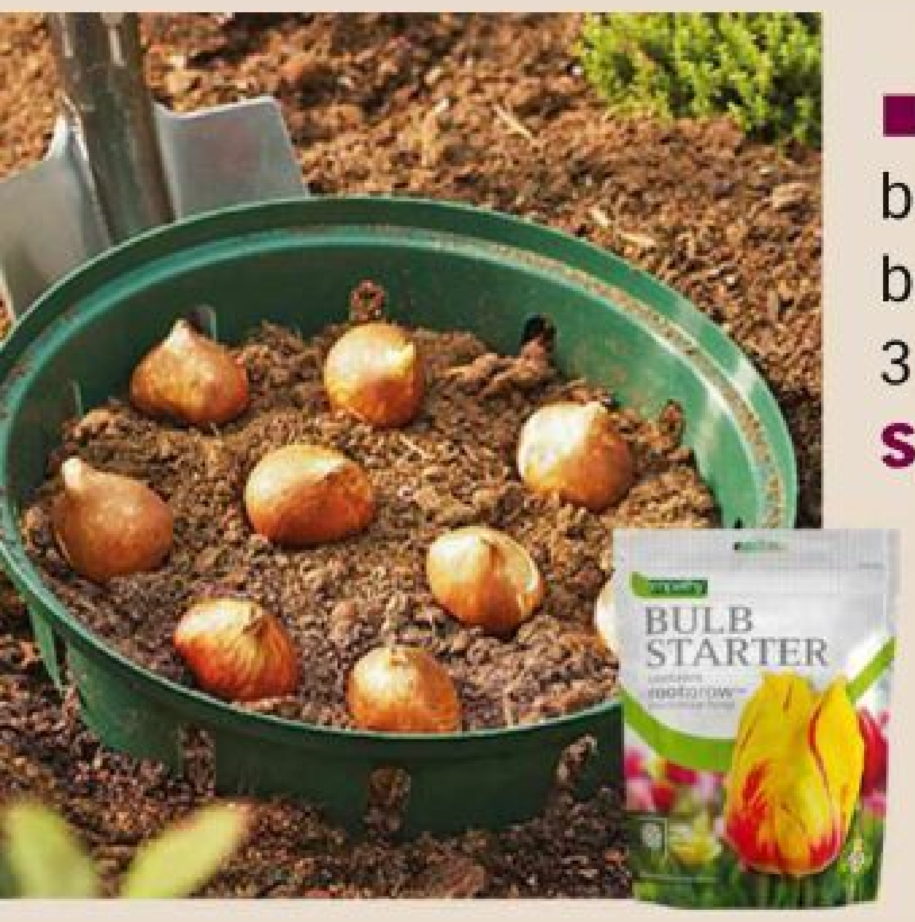

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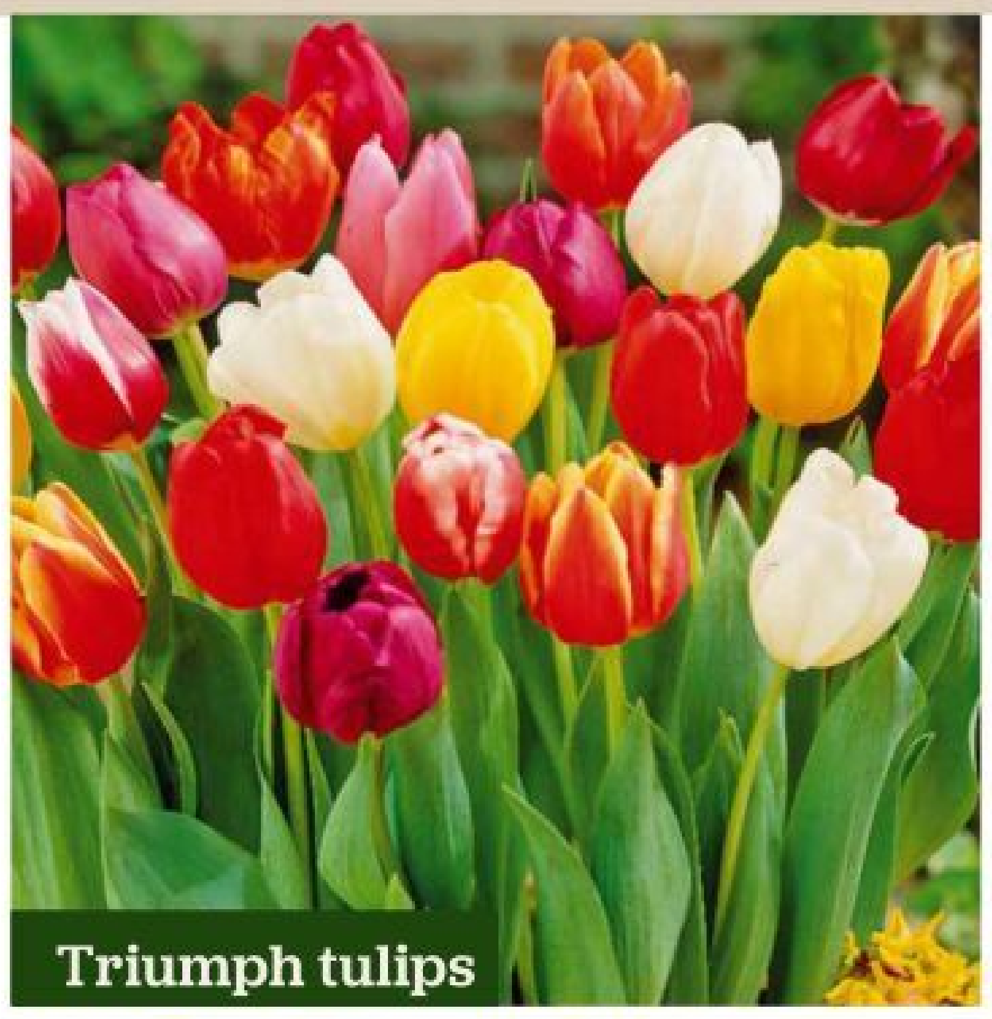
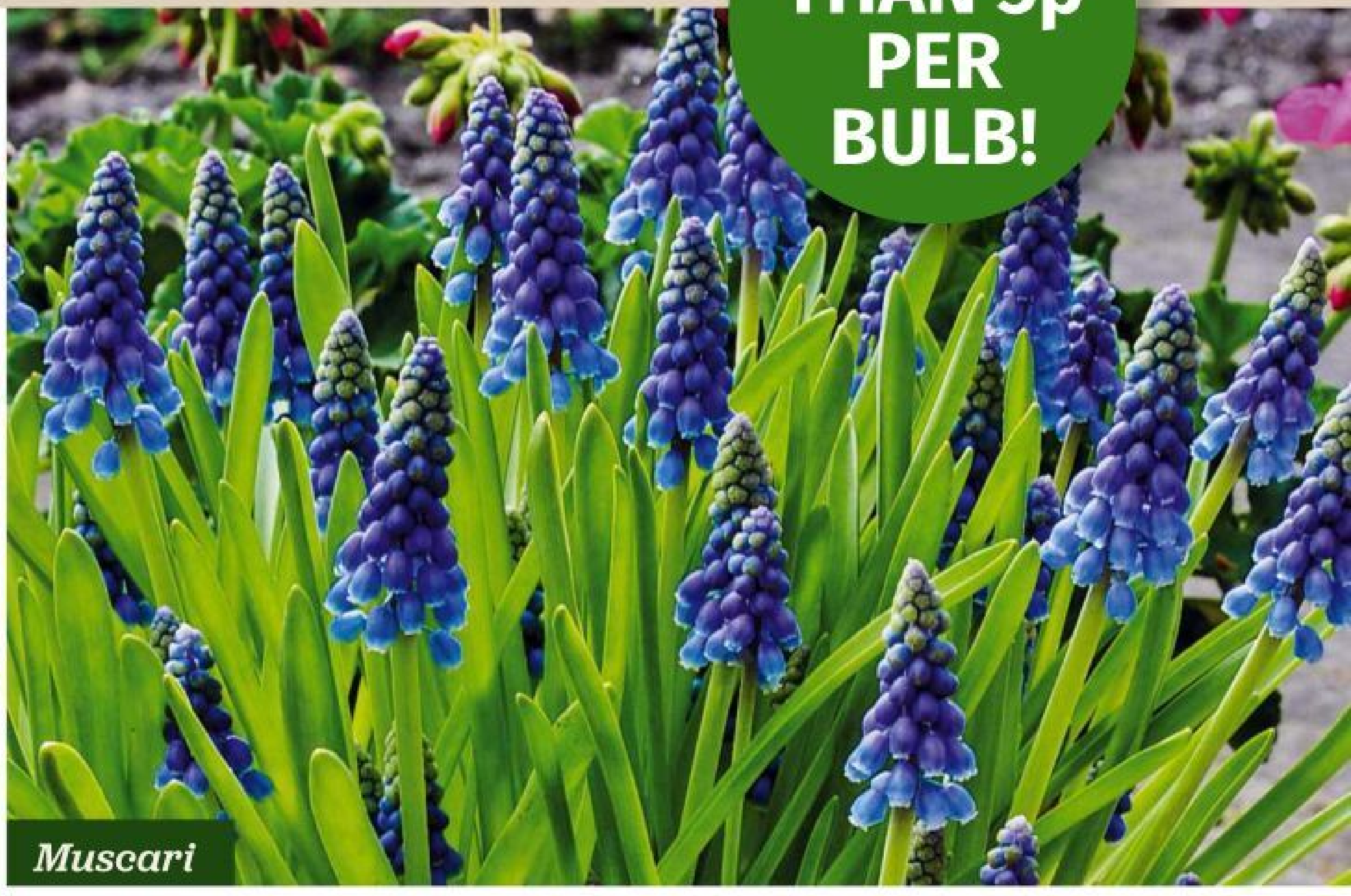
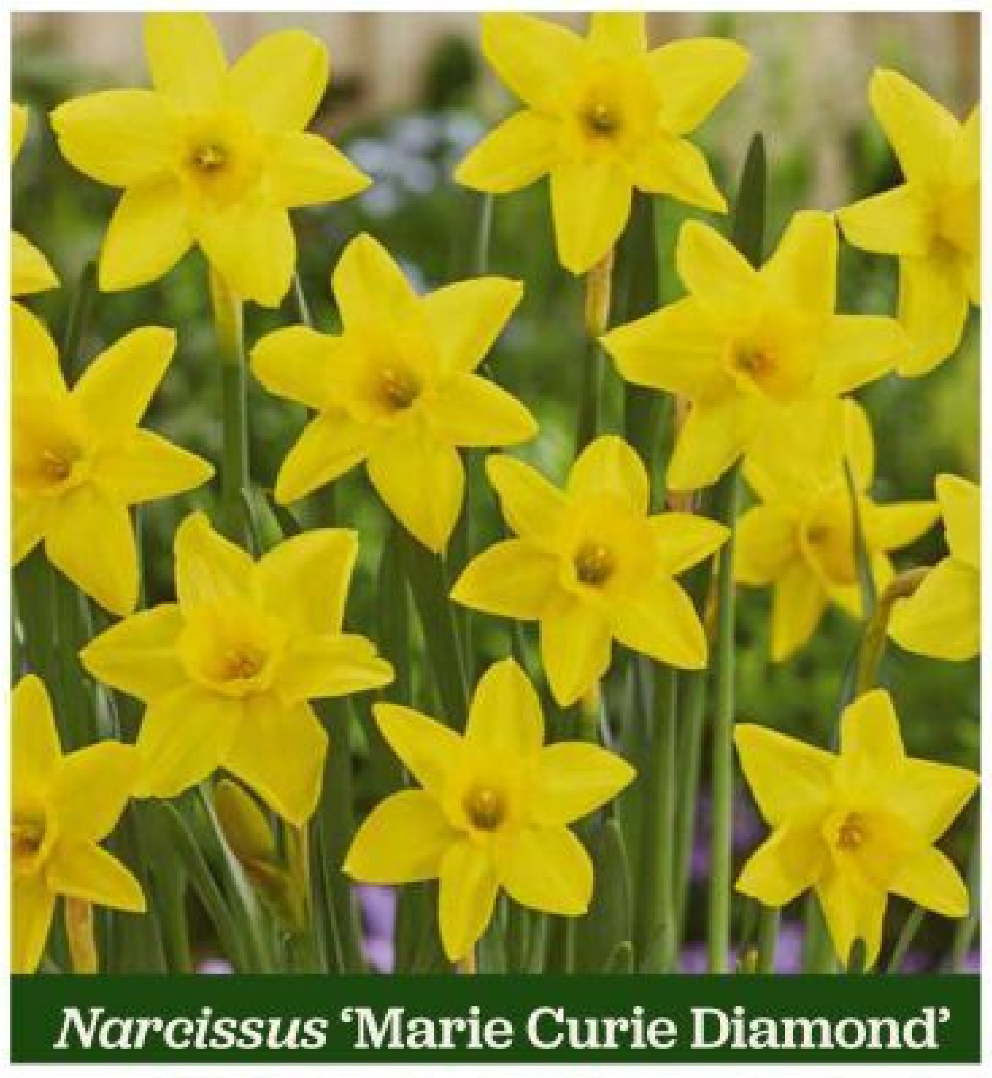


Triumph tulips



*Muscari*



*Narcissus* 'Marie Curie Diamond'

*Ipheion uniflorum*

*Crocus* 'Barr's Purple'

*Allium neapolitanum*

*Allium moly*

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*Louise Curley is the author of the award-winning book* The Cut Flower Patch. *She writes about gardens, nature and wellbeing and is currently creating a new garden at her home in West Yorkshire.*

# *Your year of* FLOWERS

Start your own cut-flower patch now and you can fill your home with homegrown blooms all year round. Expert grower, **Louise Curley**, guides you through the planning and shows you what to sow and plant through the seasons

PHOTO: JASON INGRAM

To ensure dahlias survive the winter, dig up the tubers after the first frost and store in a dry frost-free place until spring

# Autumn

Creating your own cut flower patch couldn't be simpler. Start by **preparing the area**, removing any weeds, and add a mulch of garden compost to the soil surface.

You can start **sowing hardy annuals** right now, to the end of September, to provide an early crop of flowers next spring. Sow in traditional rows or, for a less formal look, mark out areas with sand and scatter different seeds into each one (see right).

If you didn't sow biennials such as Sweet Williams and wallflowers in summer, you can **buy young plants** now in garden centres. Then simply plant them where you want them to flower next year.

Over the coming months, in October and November, plant extra **spring-flowering bulbs** such as daffodils, tulips and alliums, so you have plenty for picking. Also plant **dainty primulas** around the edges of your beds – their flowers look lovely displayed in little glass bottles. After the first hard frost, cut back the top growth of **dahlias**, then either **lift, dry off and store the tubers** somewhere frost-free over winter, or in mild areas leave them in the ground and cover with a mound of chipped bark for insulation.

***AUTUMN PICKINGS:*** *chrysanthemums, dahlias, rudbeckias, cosmos, nerines, ornamental grasses, spindle, schizostylis*

**Sow hardy annuals now, either in rows or in informal swathes marked out with sand**

PHOTOS: PAUL DEBOIS; SARAH CUTTLE; JASON INGRAM;

MARCH
FEBRUARY
JANUARY
Flowers Sweet Pea
Nelson'

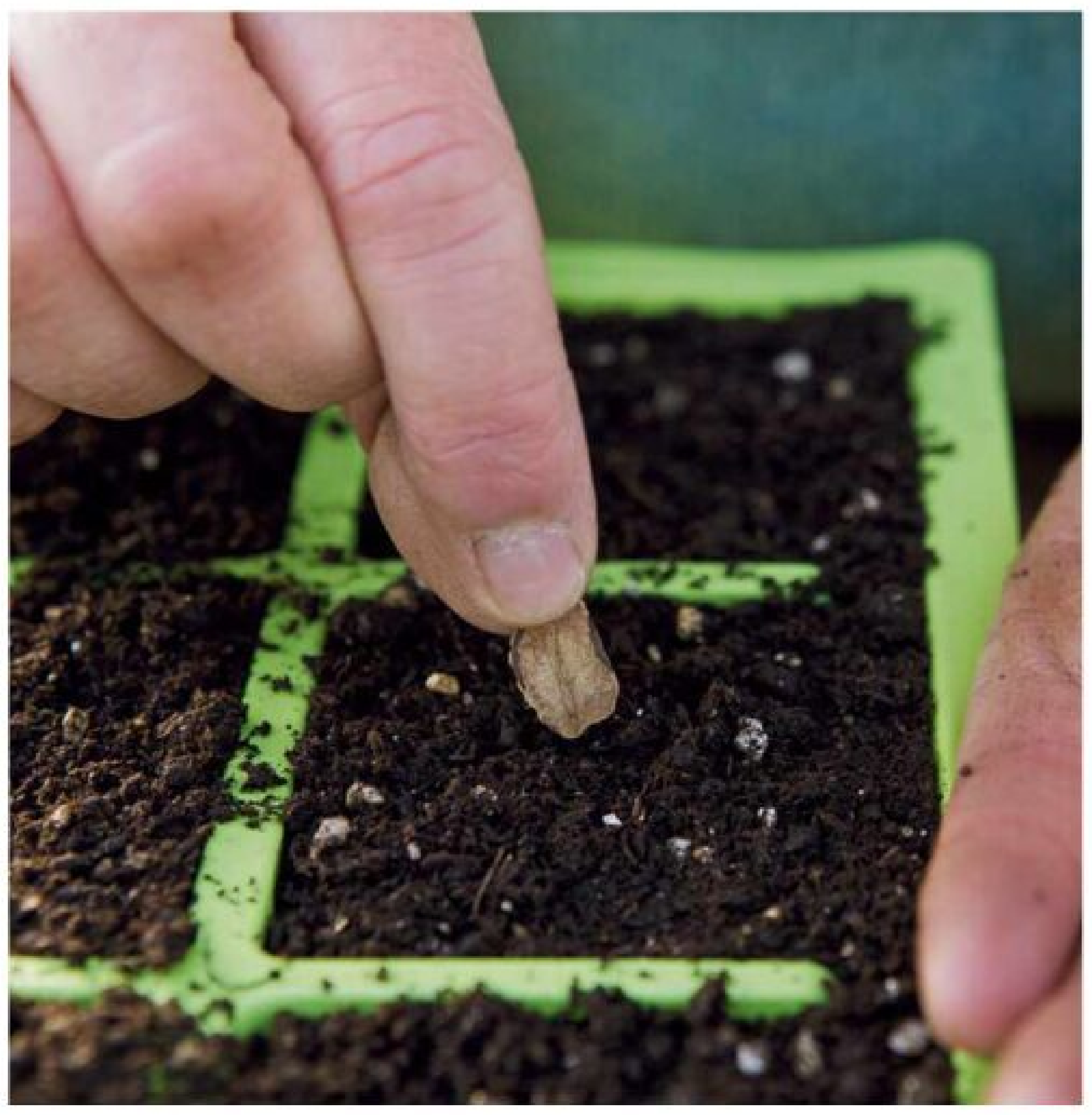
**Go through your seeds in winter to see what you already have, then browse seed websites to decide what else you'd like to grow in your cutting patch**

## Winter

Now is the time to **plan what you want to grow**. Maximise your potential pickings by choosing plants that produce **lots of flowers** over a long period. These tend to be annuals, biennials and dahlias, but you could also include long-flowering perennials such as salvias and heleniums. It's worth growing herbs too, such as mint and rosemary, for **fragrant foliage**, as well as scented-leaved pelargoniums.

**Order seeds**, plug plants and dahlias during winter too. In late February, **sow first-year-flowering perennials** such as achilleas, echinacea and agastache indoors, plus **slow-growing annuals** like antirrhinums and *Cobaea scandens*. ***WINTER PICKINGS:*** *snowdrops, early narcissus and iris, forced hyacinth, hellebores, eucalyptus and holly for foliage*

**Fast-growing achilleas can produce their wide flower clusters in their first summer**



**Sow the flat seeds of *Cobaea scandens* vertically, to reduce the risk of rotting**

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## Spring

In late March, **plant dahlia tubers** in pots and keep in a frost-free spot until they can be planted out in late May. Add **well-rotted manure** to the soil where the dahlias will be planted.

Straight stems are important for cut flowers, so **put up supports** so your plants don't flop or get damaged by heavy rain and wind. This is best done in spring while the plants are still small, rather than later on in summer. **A ring of bamboo canes and twine** works well for dahlias, while jute netting strung horizontally over a bed, supported at the edges by bamboo canes, is ideal to support plants such as cosmos, cornflowers and scabious.

I like to **sow seeds in trays indoors**, as you can control the growing conditions. In March and April, **sow hardy annuals** such as sweet peas, scabious, ammi, cornflowers, cerinthe, strawflowers and larkspur. But note that nigella doesn't like root disturbance, so sow these direct in April. Wait until mid-April to sow half-hardy annuals such as cosmos, rudbeckias, zinnias, *Phlox drummondii* and sunflowers. Grow them on in 9cm pots before **planting out** as sturdy young plants, which are much less likely to be eaten by slugs.

**Plug plants** bought from garden centres or online are a great option if you don't have space to look after a lot of seedlings. Pot up the plugs and **grow them on indoors** for a few weeks or until the risk of frost has passed.

In May, **harden off hardy annuals** and plant out. Towards the end of the month start to harden off half-hardy annuals.

***SPRING PICKINGS:*** *daffodils, tulips, alliums, primulas, lily of the valley*

**Once your seedlings are large enough to handle, move them into individual pots**

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS

**For good long stems on your dahlias and other cut flowers, put supports in place in spring to keep plants upright and undamaged**

# Summer

In June, **plant out** any last half-hardy annuals and tender perennials, such as scented-leaved pelargoniums and dahlias. By late June, **sow biennials**, including sweet Williams, sweet rocket, wallflowers, Canterbury bells and honesty.

From late August, **sow hardy annuals** like nigella, larkspur, calendula, scabious and cornflowers, for early flowers next summer. These will overwinter as young plants and have a head start next spring.

Most cut flowers don't need **feeding during the summer months**. However, particularly hungry plants such as sweet peas and dahlias will benefit from liquid tomato or seaweed fertiliser applied every week from midsummer.

***SUMMER PICKINGS:*** *almost everything! For more ideas, see* ***GardenersWorld.com/cut-flower-year***

**Plant out tender dahlias – they'll soon start flowering as the weather warms up**

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**Bring summer's bounty of flowers and foliage into your home – including yellow cosmos and scented-leaved pelargoniums**

PHOTOS: PAUL DEBOIS; JASON INGRAM

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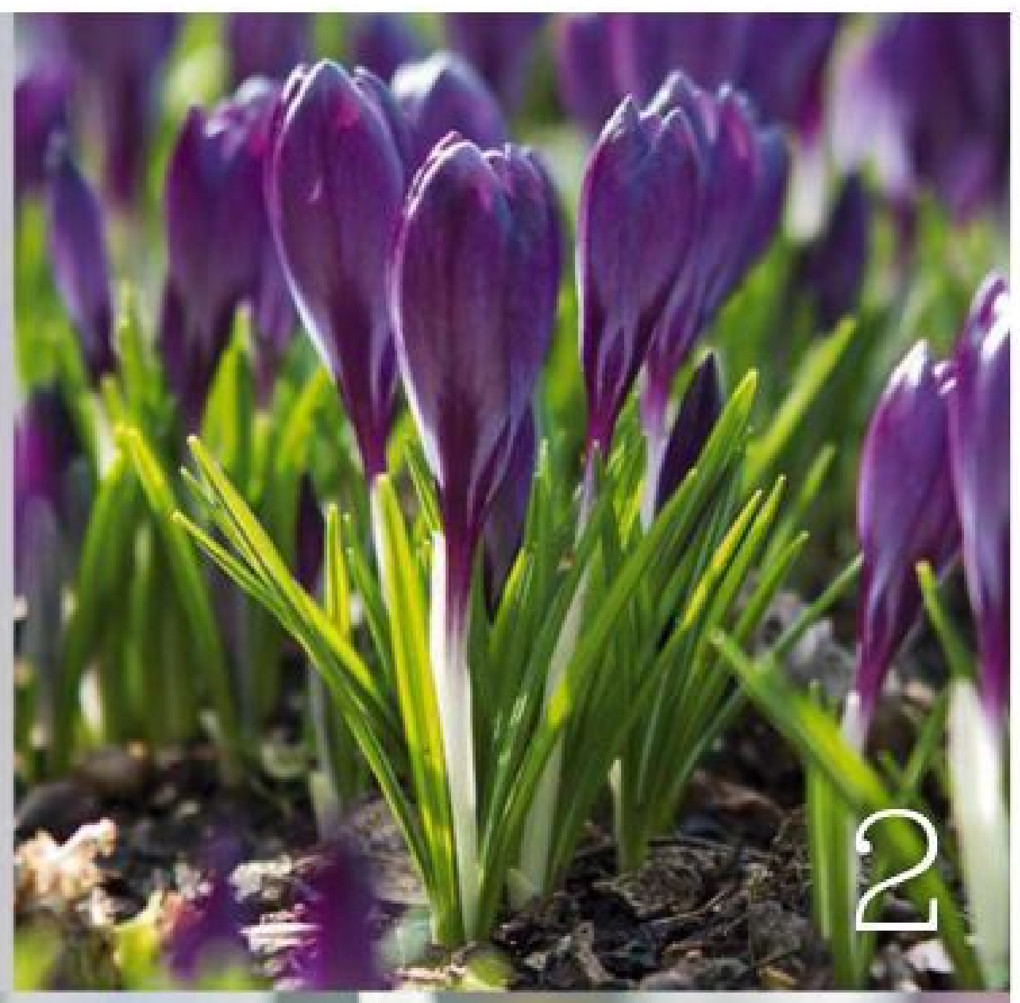
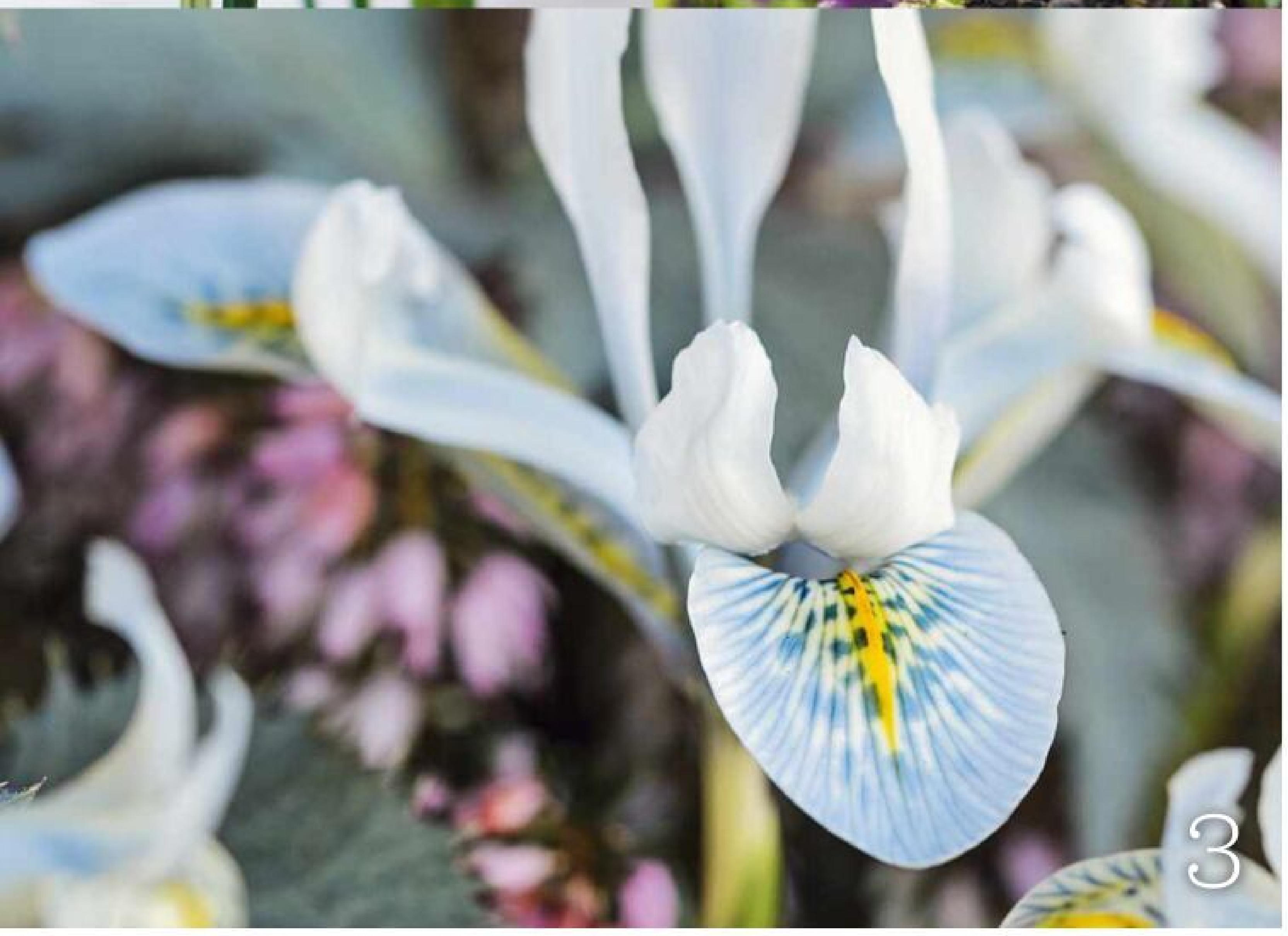
# 55 spring bulbs for months of colour

Summer's end may be near, but the season for planting bulbs is just starting. Follow our guide for five months of colour from winter to the end of spring

**WORDS** LUCY FELTON **ILLUSTRATIONS** SARAH SMART DRAWS





**1** ***Iris* 'Edward'**
Violet-blue petals splashed with zingy yellow and white, for plenty of winter drama. Grows best in free-draining soil in full sun.
**Height x Spread** 15cm x 10cm

**2** ***Crocus tommasinianus* 'Barr's Purple'**
Standing upright to attention before opening to reveal bright orange stamens. Provides pollinators with much-needed food in early spring.
**H x S** 10cm x 5cm

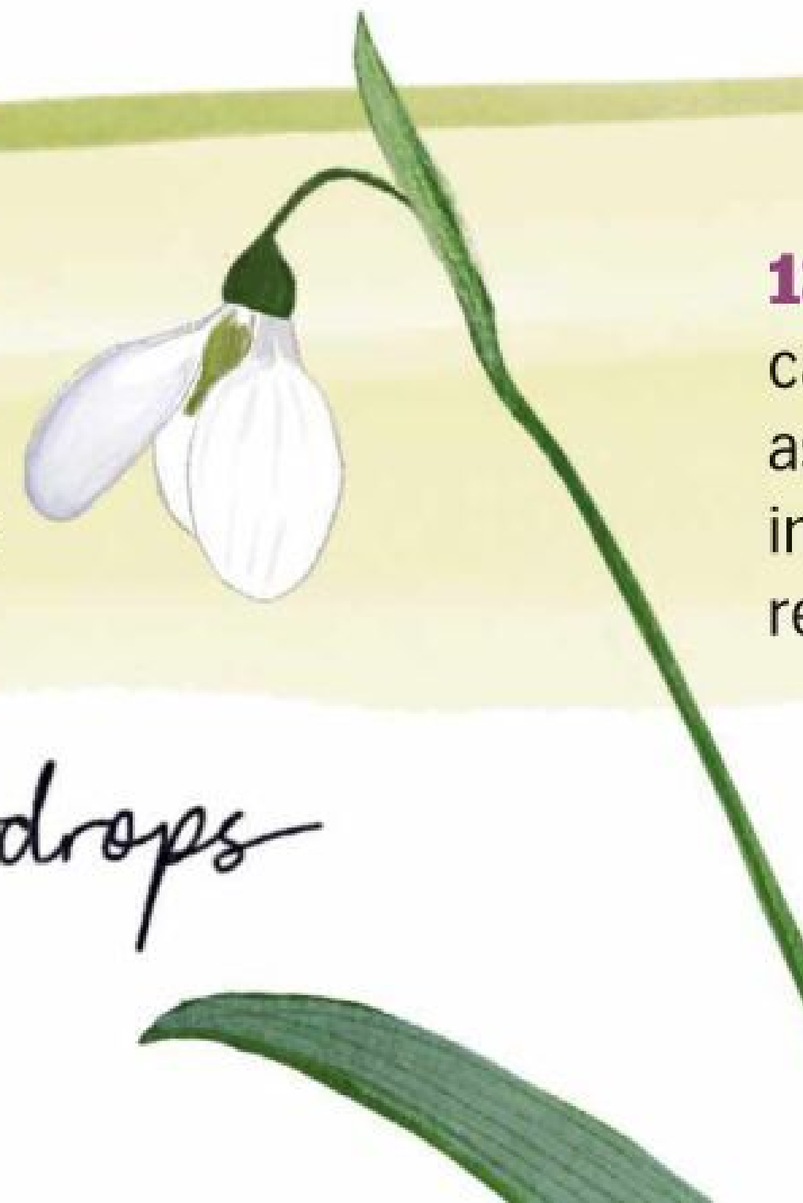
**3** ***Iris* 'Katharine Hodgkin'**
A cheery dwarf iris. Plant as clusters in flower beds and in doorstep pots. Mulch with a layer of grit to stop springtime rain-splash dirtying the flowers.
**H x S** 10cm x 10cm

**4** ***Iris* 'George'**
Early-flowering with a whiff of perfume. Perfect for pots.
**H x S** 10cm x 10cm

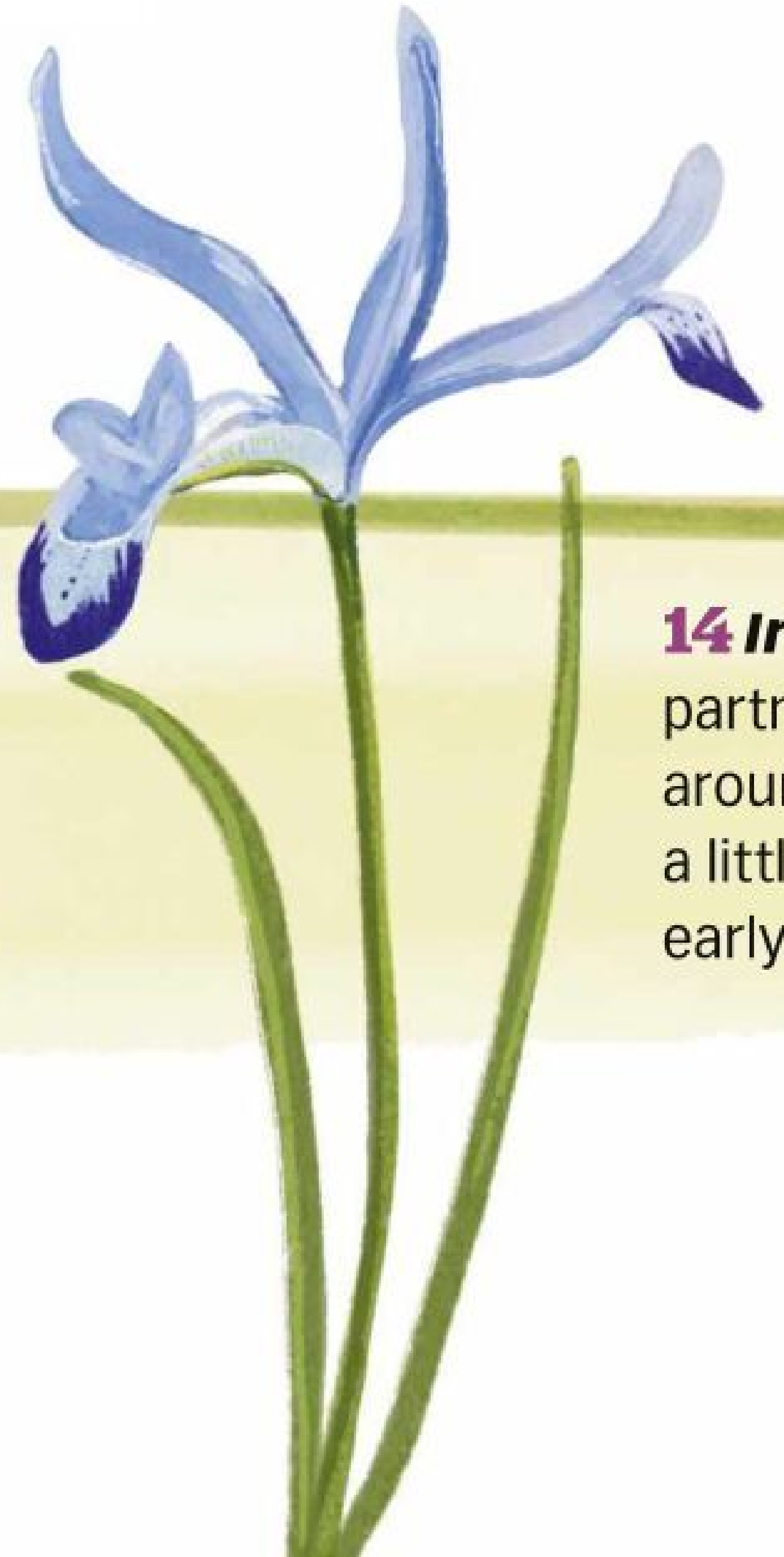
## JANUARY to FEBRUARY

**Welcome these joyful shoots** full of colour, scent and the promise of spring. Create pockets of iris, crocuses, snowdrops and more, to pop up like forgotten treasure around the garden.

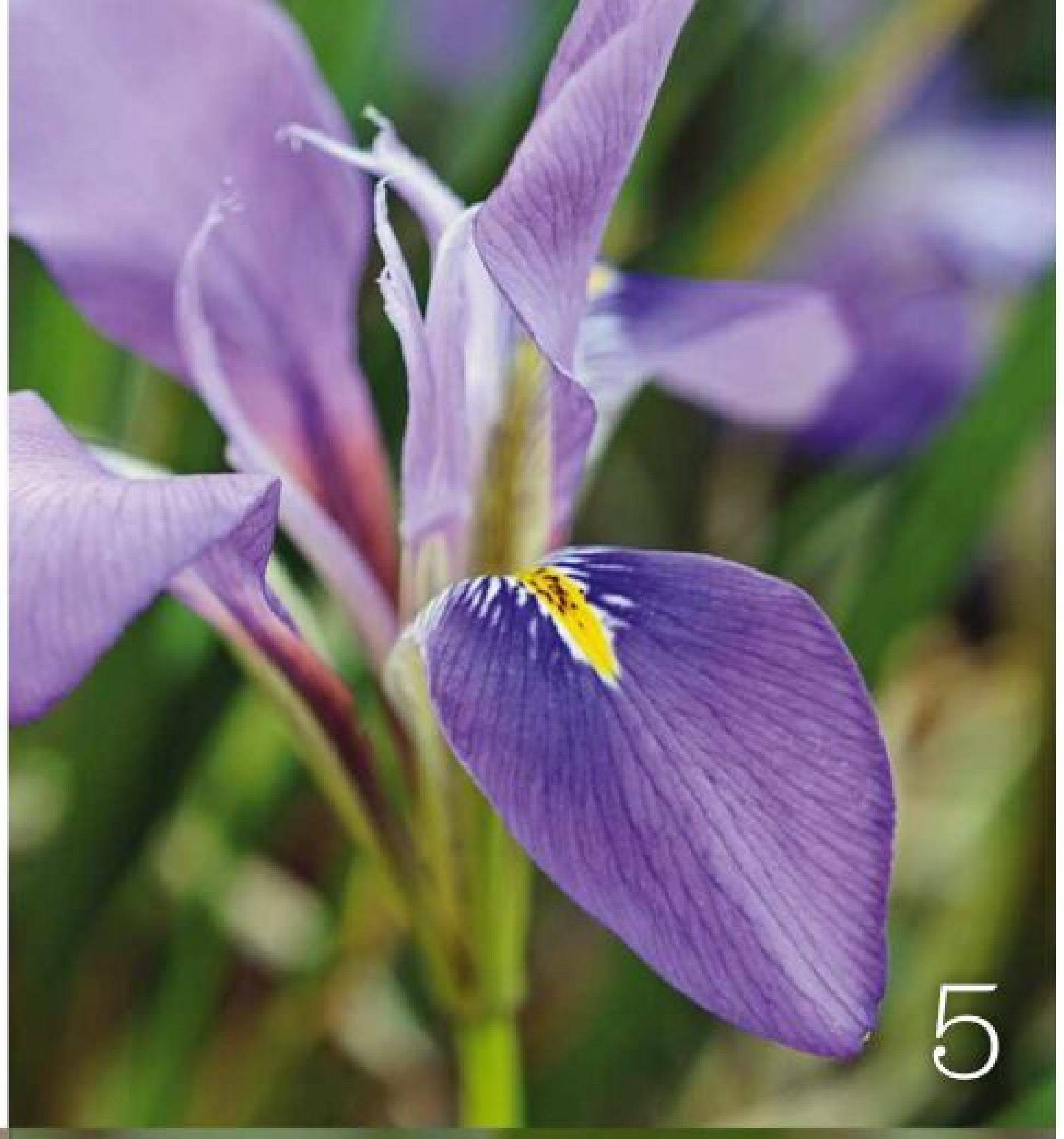
**12** ***Galanthus* 'Three Ships'** flowers in winter, possibly greeting you on New Year's Day



**13** ***Iris danfordiae*** can flower as early as January. Plant out in large numbers for real impact



**14** ***Iris* 'Clairette'** can be partnered with crocus bulbs around deciduous trees for a little woodland magic in early springtime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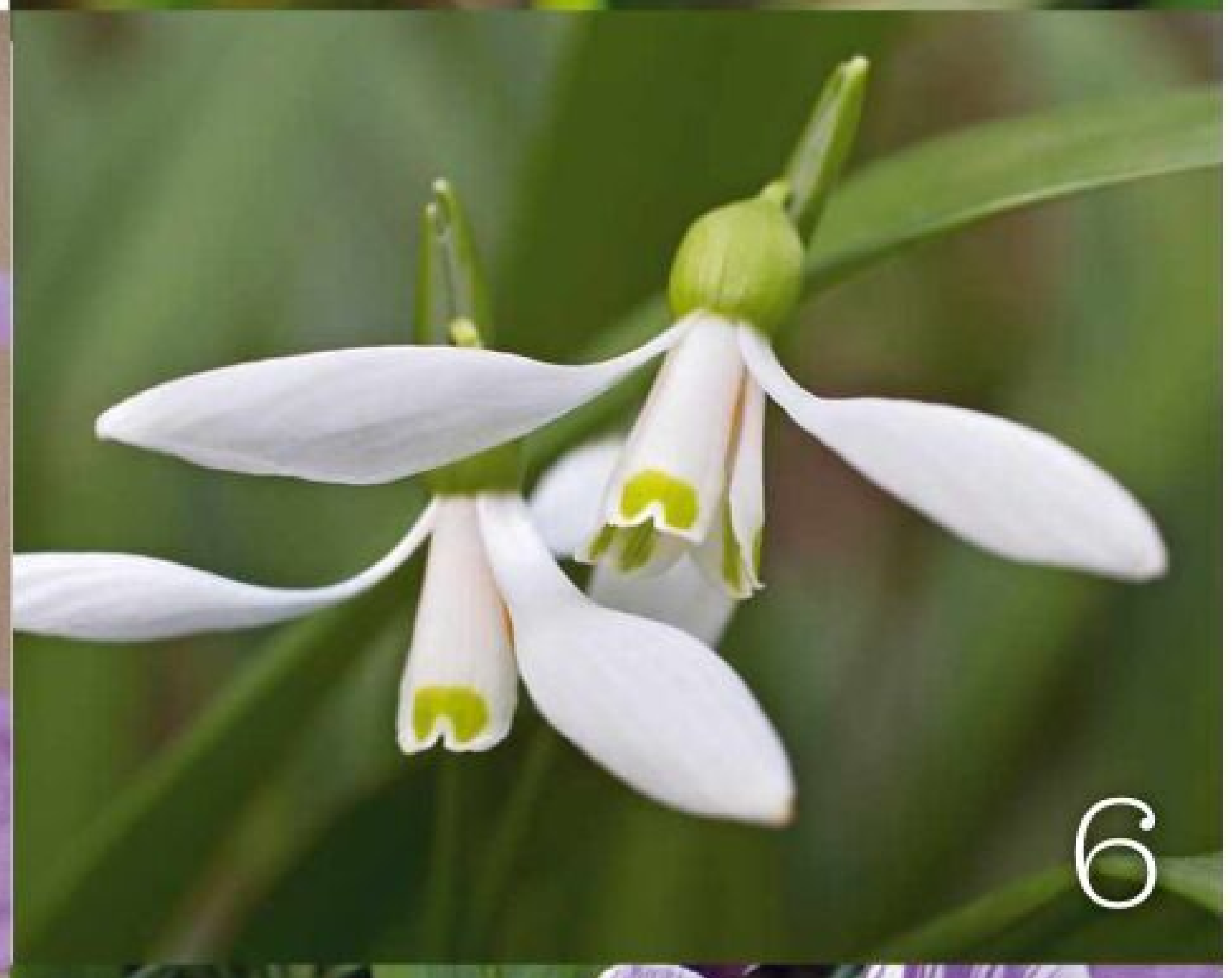
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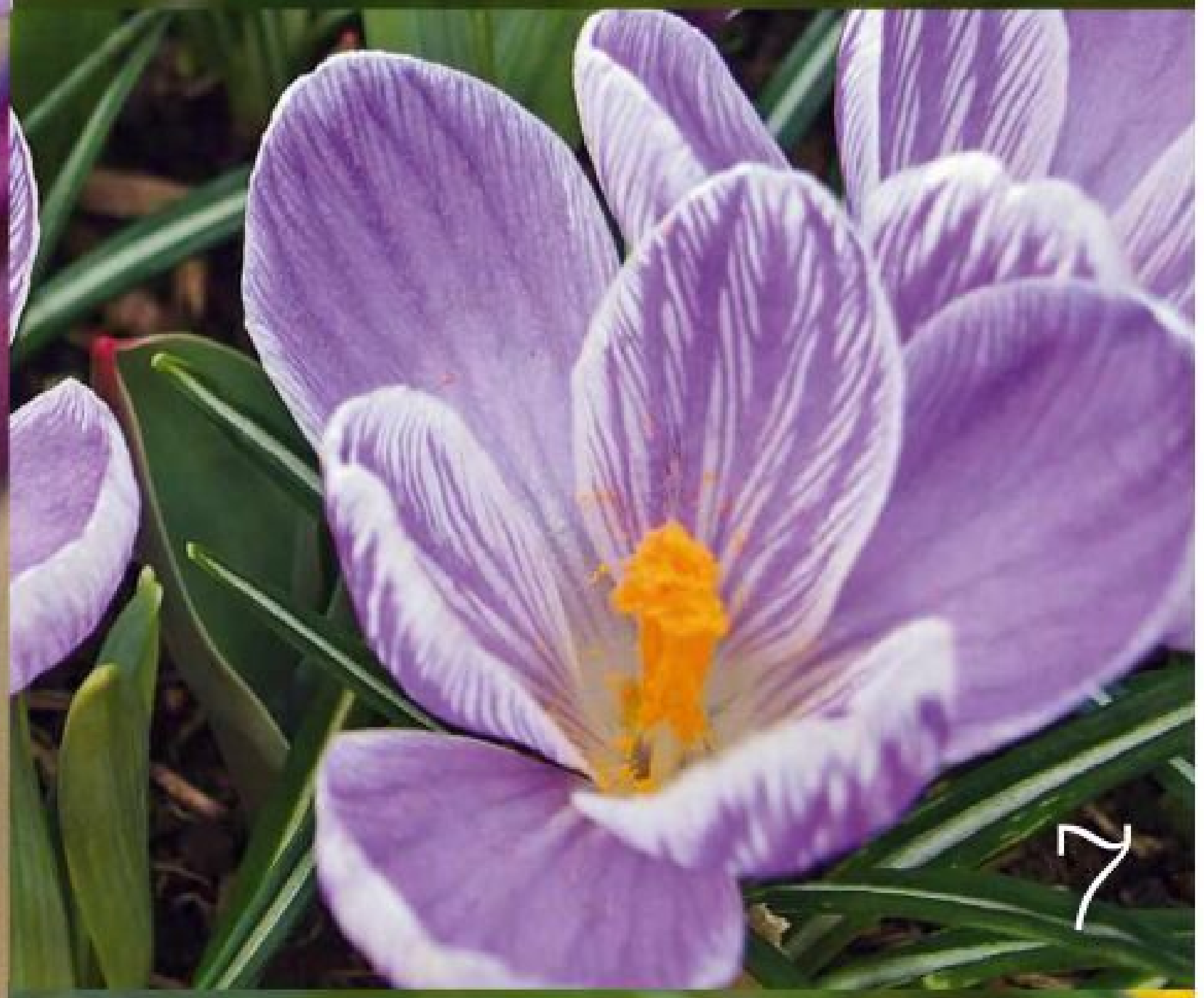
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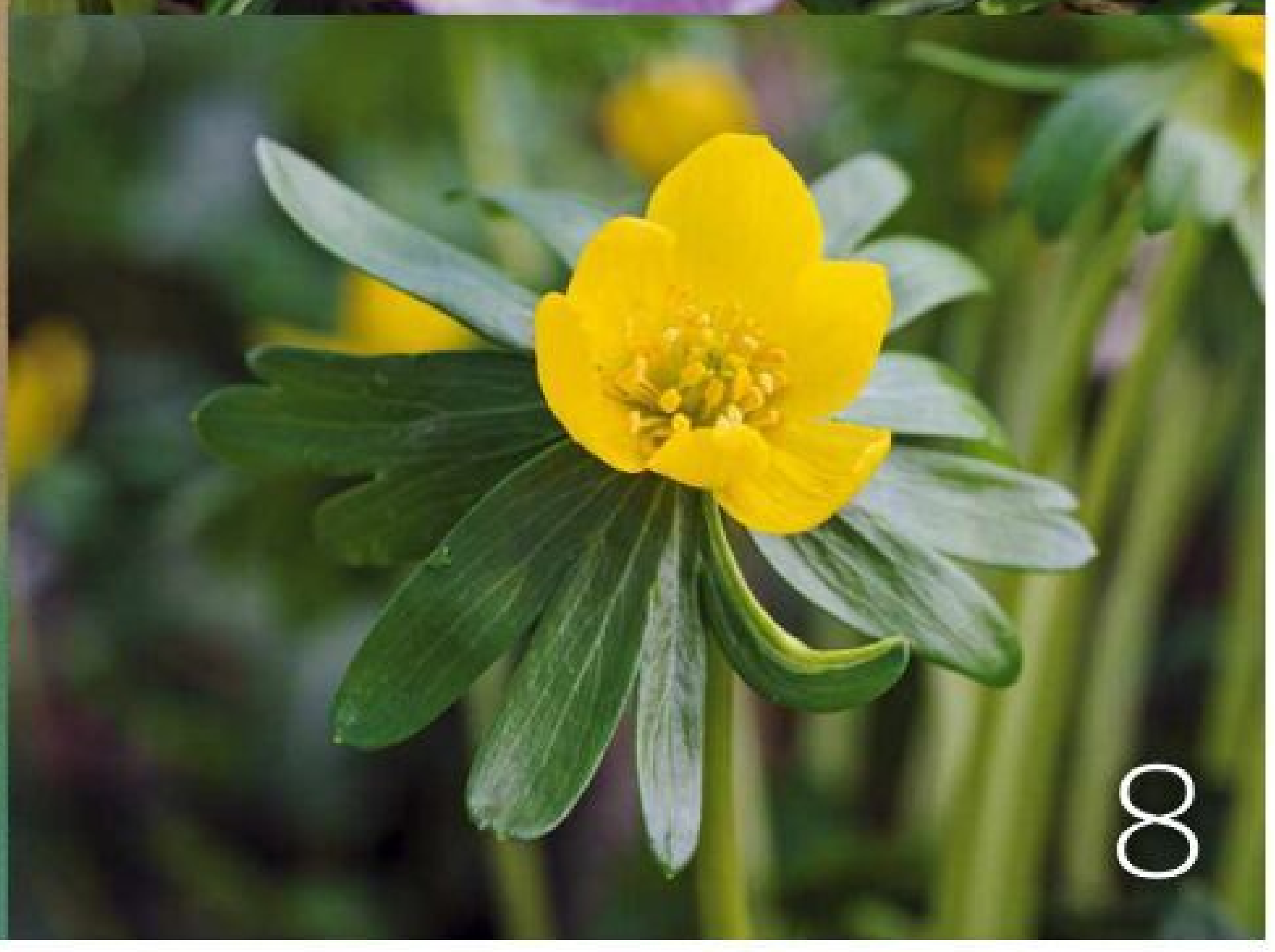
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**5 *Iris unguicularis* 'Mary Barnard'**
A full fragrance, narrow leaves and jewel-toned petals. Flowers during mild spells in winter and early spring.
**H x S** 40cm x 40cm

**6 *Galanthus woronowii***
A tough, handsome snowdrop that can grow in an unusually wide range of conditions, from dense woodland to rocky slopes and riverbanks.
**H x S** 15cm x 5cm

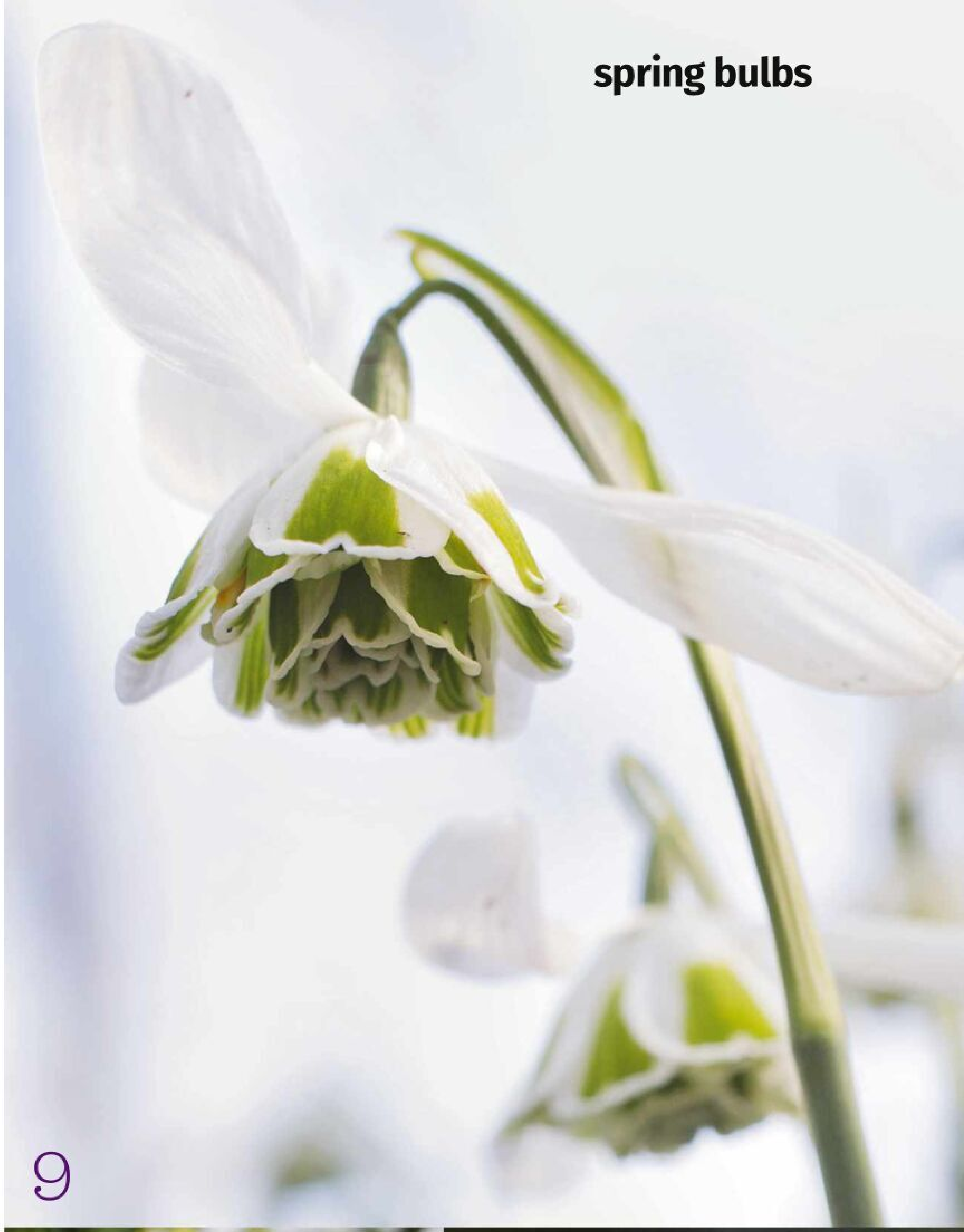
**7 *Crocus* 'King Of The Striped'**
Bold, two-tone petals open to reveal an orange stigma.
**H x S** 10cm x 5cm

**8 *Eranthis x tubergenii***
Choose this large-flowered variety of winter aconite for a bolt of gold in shade.
**H x S** 10cm x 10cm

**9 *Galanthus* 'Cordelia'**
Delicate outer petals and a double inner rosette with green markings. Plant snowdrops in drifts for a natural look.
**H x S** 15cm x 8cm

**10 *Galanthus* 'Primrose Warburg'**
Famed for its stand-out yellow ovary, but also prized for subtle petal-markings below.
**H x S** 20cm x 8cm

**11 *Galanthus* 'Walrus'**
Slender outer 'tusks' streaked with green. A full, double centre.
**H x S** 10cm x 5cm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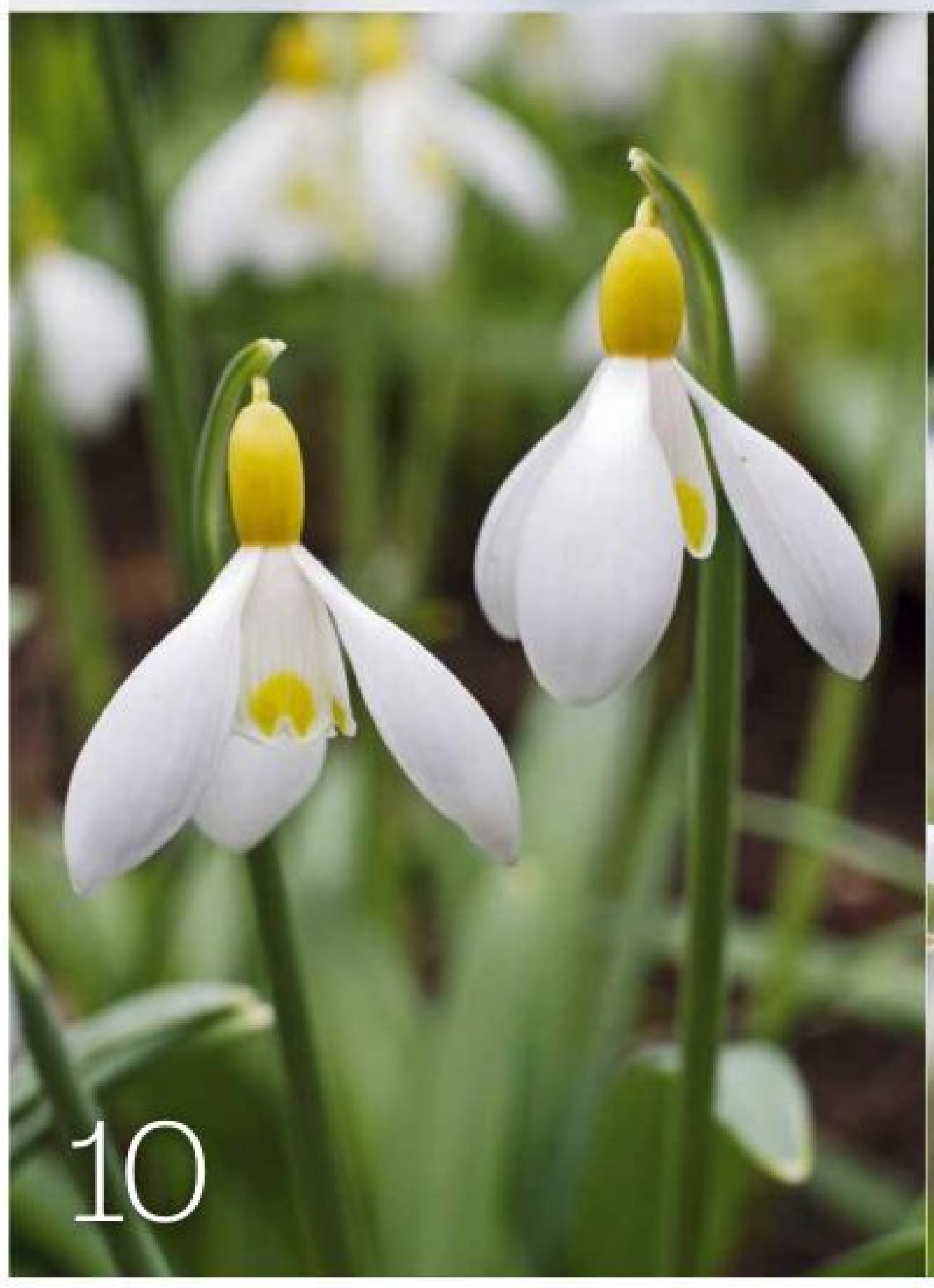
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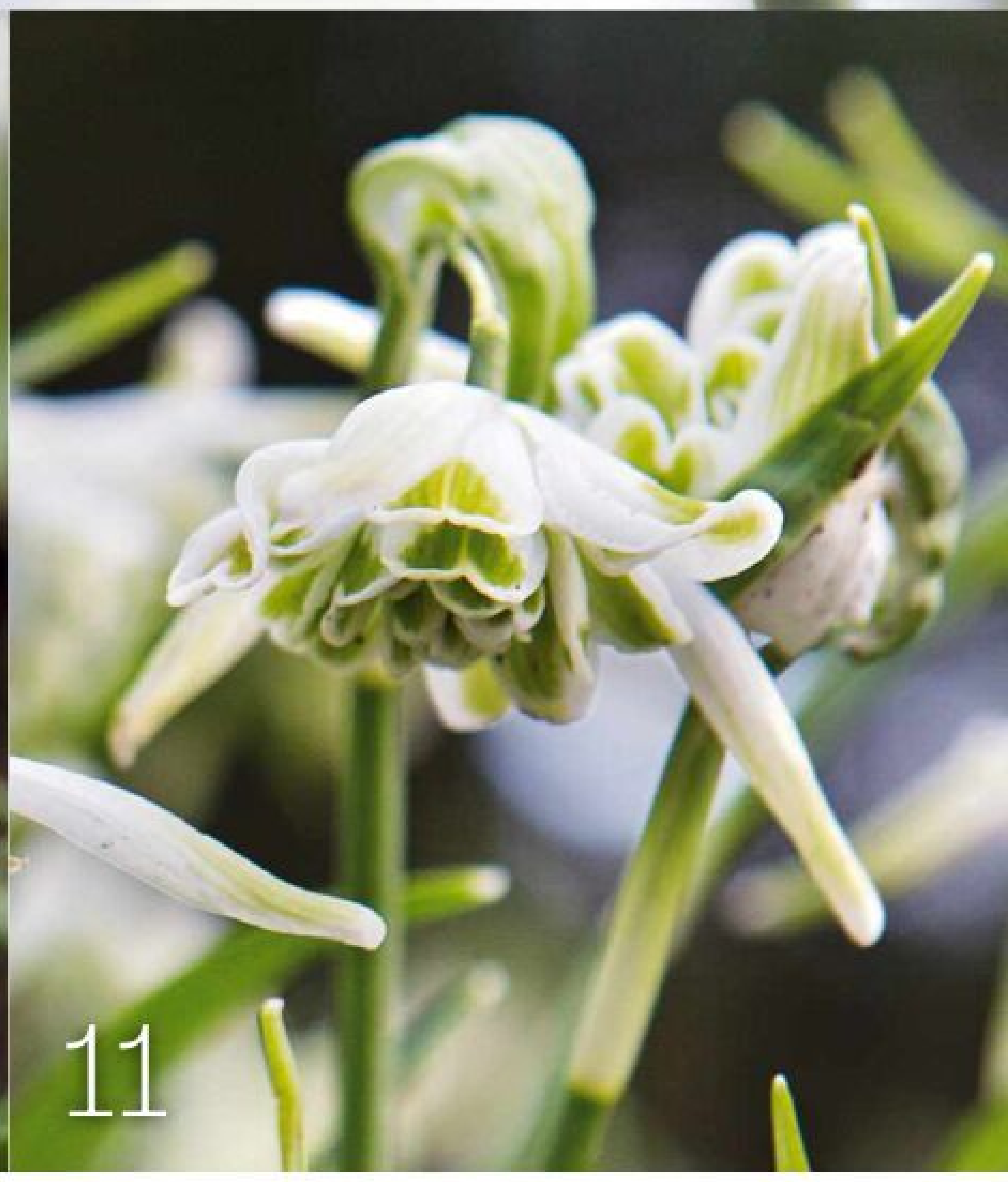
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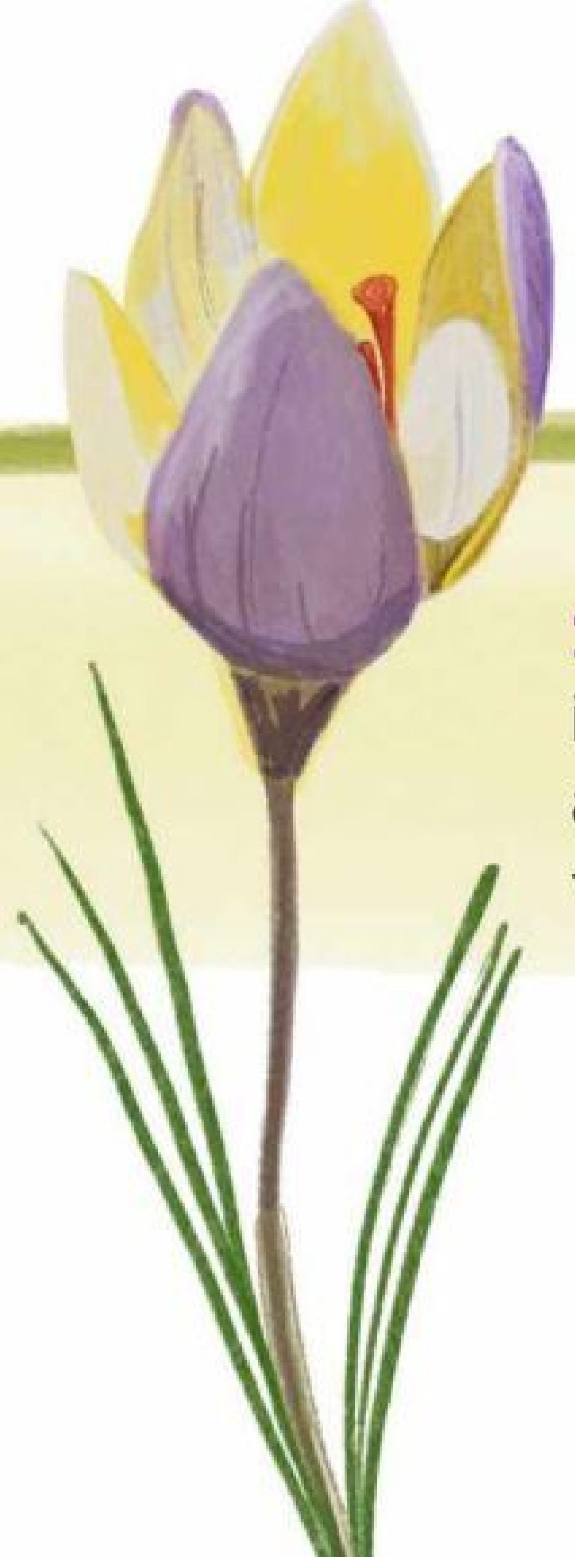
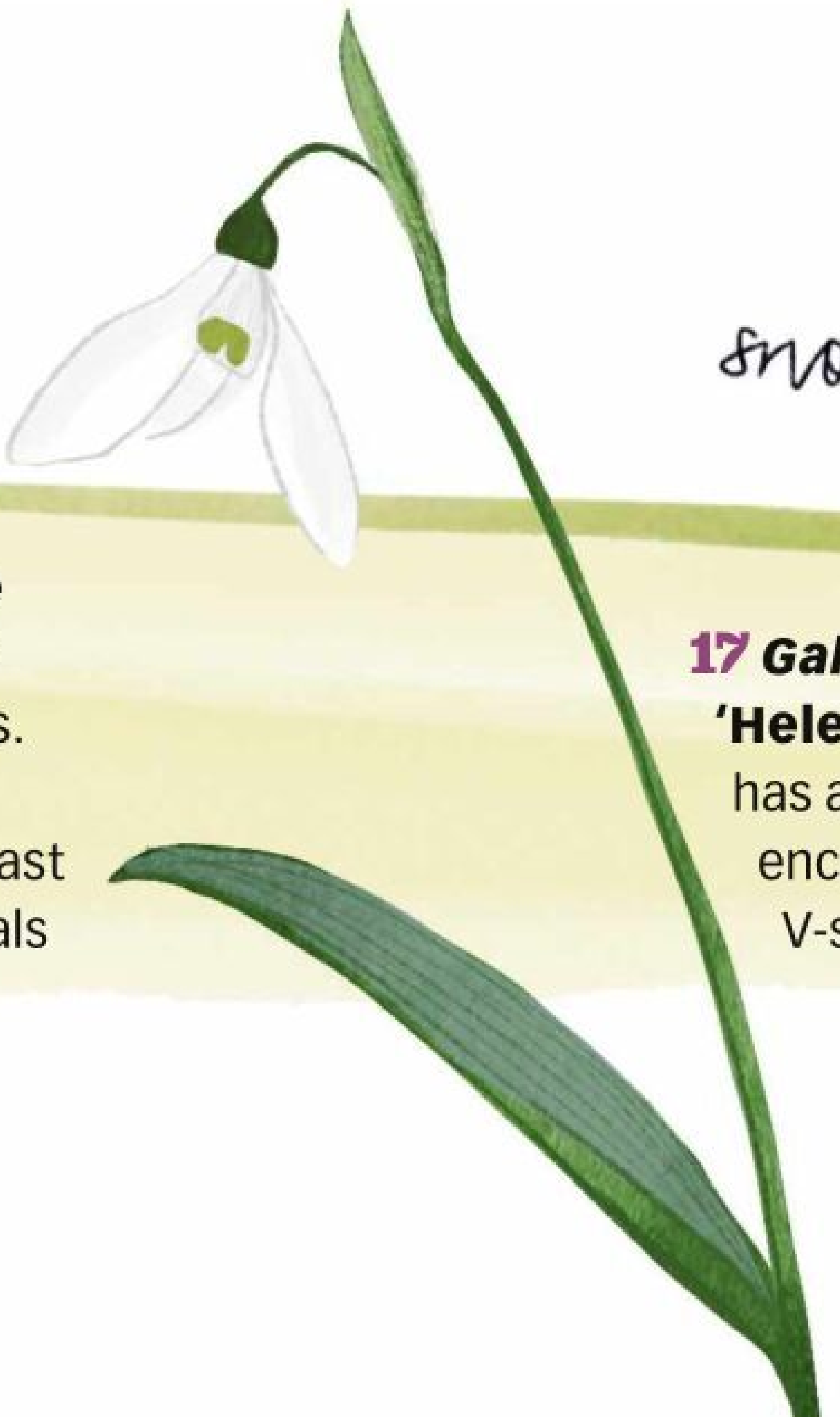
crocus



**15 *Crocus* 'Advance'** is an old variety with unusual, and particularly showy, two-toned goblets

**16 *Crocus* 'Jeanne D'Arc'** is a go-to for understated displays. The orange stigma offers a subtle contrast against the pale petals

snowdrops



**17 *Galanthus elwesii* 'Helen Tomlinson'** has a white petal skirt encasing dainty green V-shaped inner flecks

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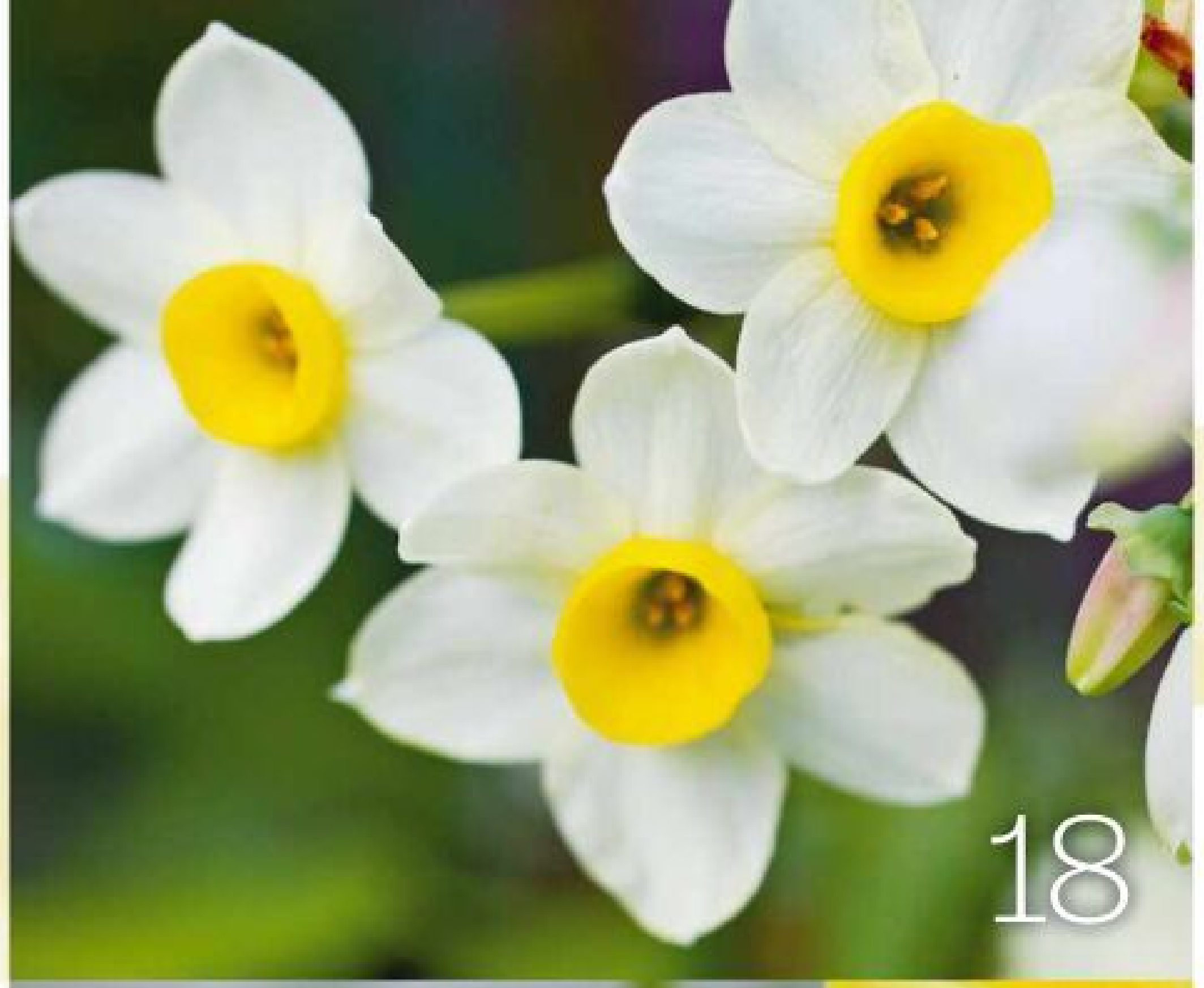
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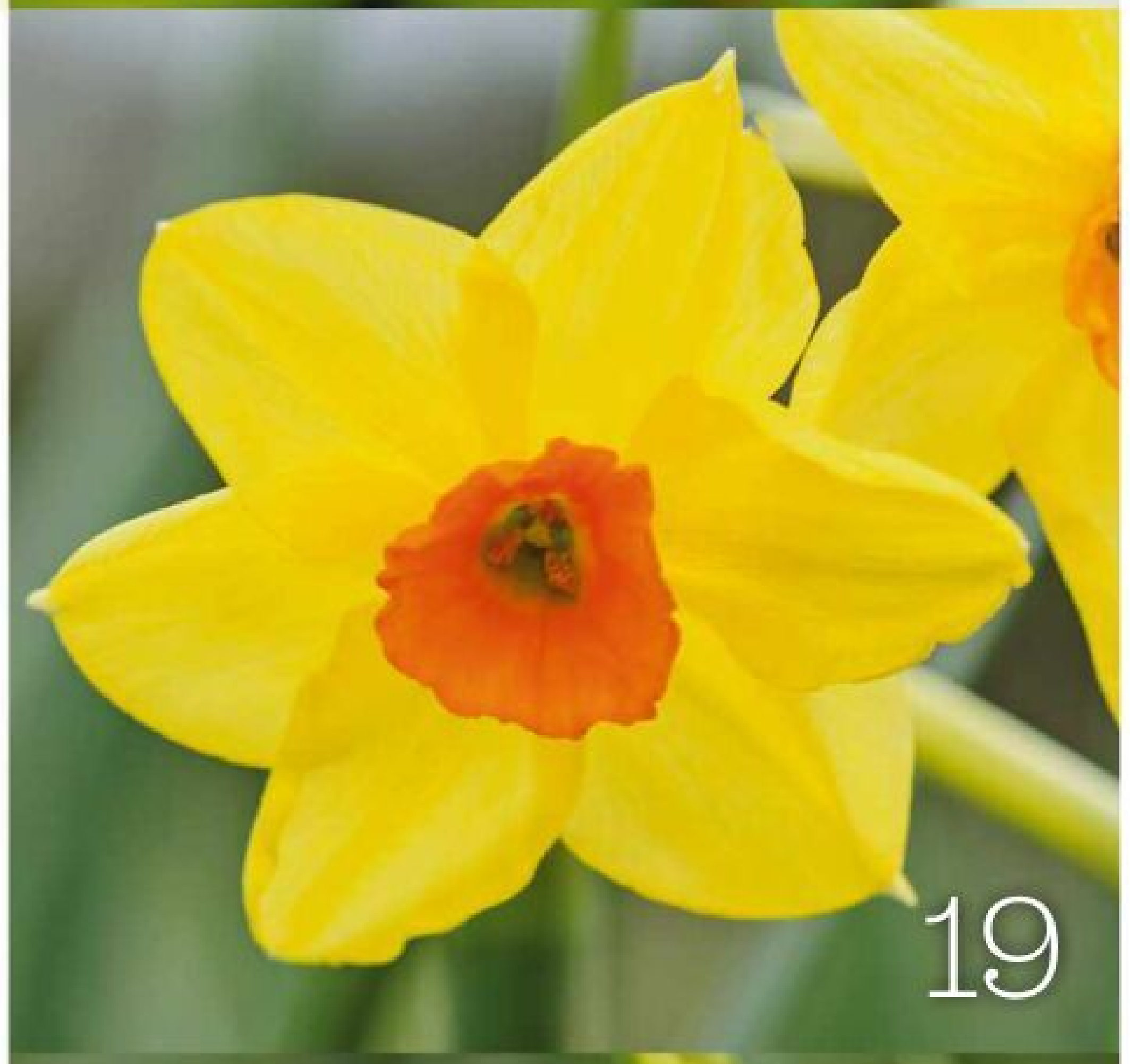
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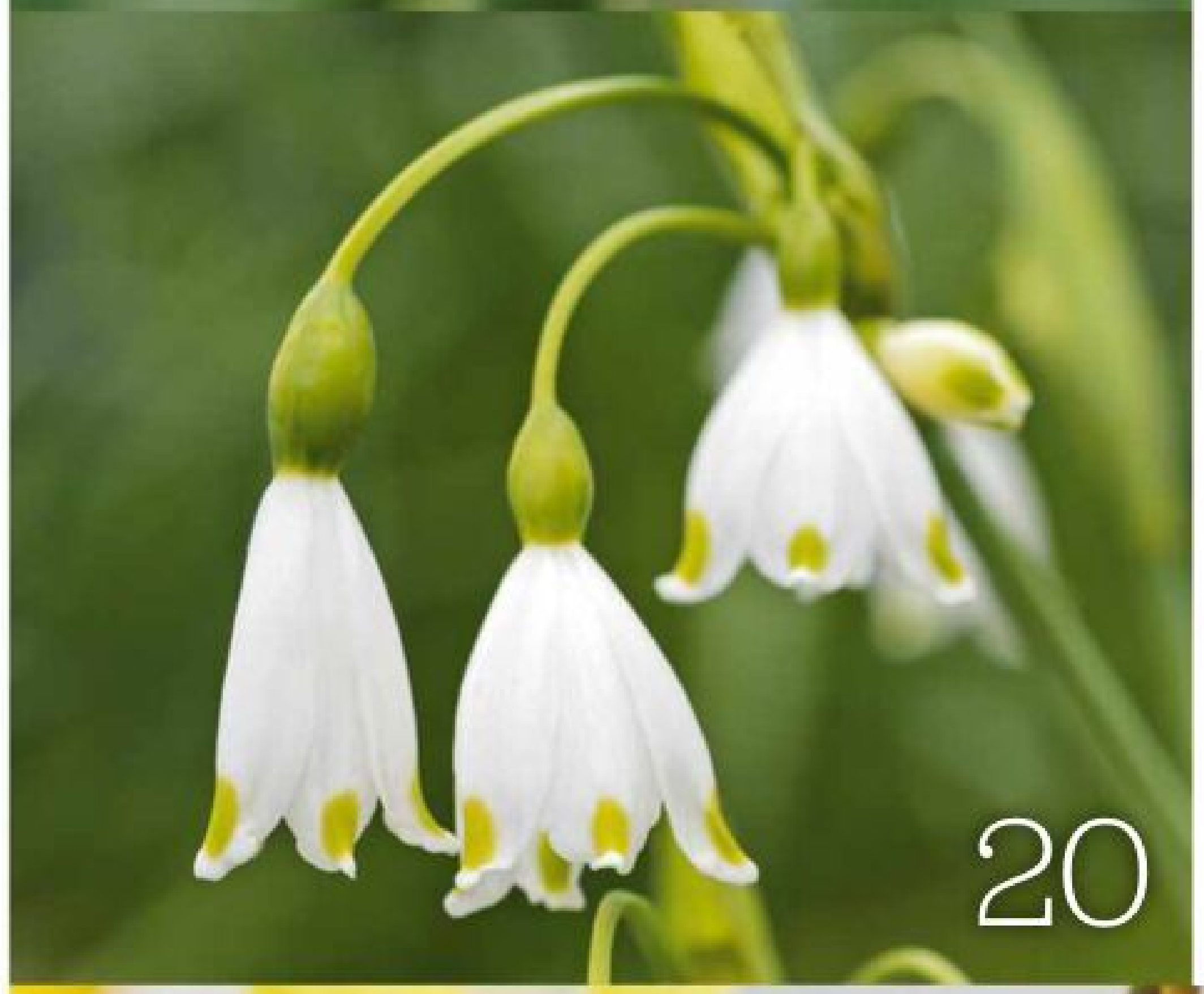
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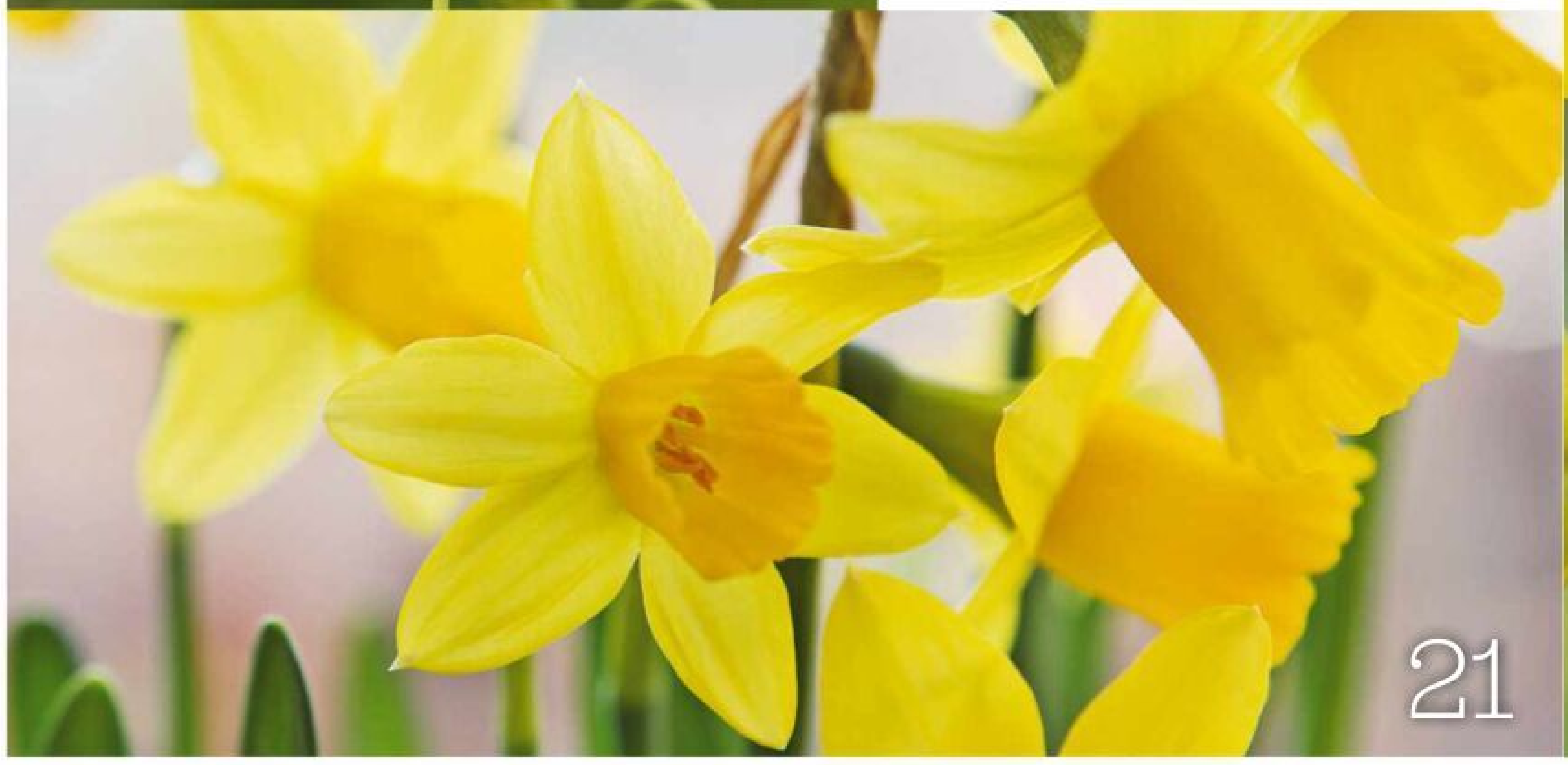
**18** ***Narcissus* 'Minnow'**
Petite daffodil, bearing up to five small flowers on each stem, fading from pale yellow to cream. Scented, and perfect for the front of the border.
**H x S** 20cm x 15cm

**19** ***Narcissus* 'Golden Dawn'**
Rich, yellow petals with a deep, yolk-coloured cup at the centre. A perfect cut-flower option.
**H x S** 45cm x 10cm

**20** ***Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye Giant'**
The snowflake has the looks of a snowdrop, but flowers later on in the spring, with several blooms to each towering stem.
**H x S** 40cm x 10cm

**21** ***Narcissus* 'Tête-à-tête'**
Tiny daffodils with a natural character that helps them to look at home anywhere in the garden. Very easy to grow.
**H x S** 20cm x 5cm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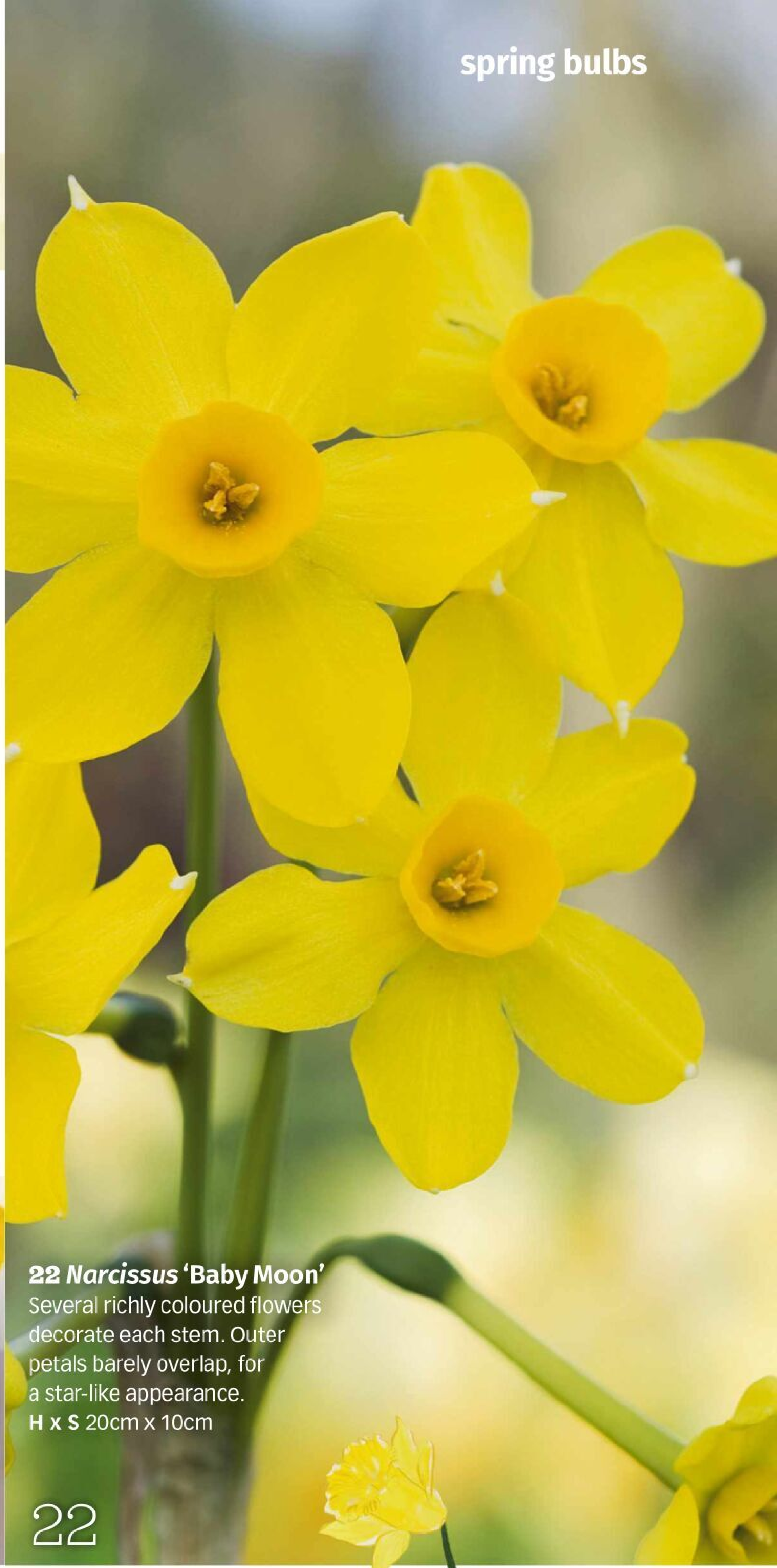
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**22** ***Narcissus* 'Baby Moon'**
Several richly coloured flowers decorate each stem. Outer petals barely overlap, for a star-like appearance.
**H x S** 20cm x 10cm

ILLUSTRATIONS: SARAH SMART DRAWS. PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; NEIL HEPWORTH; JASON INGRAM

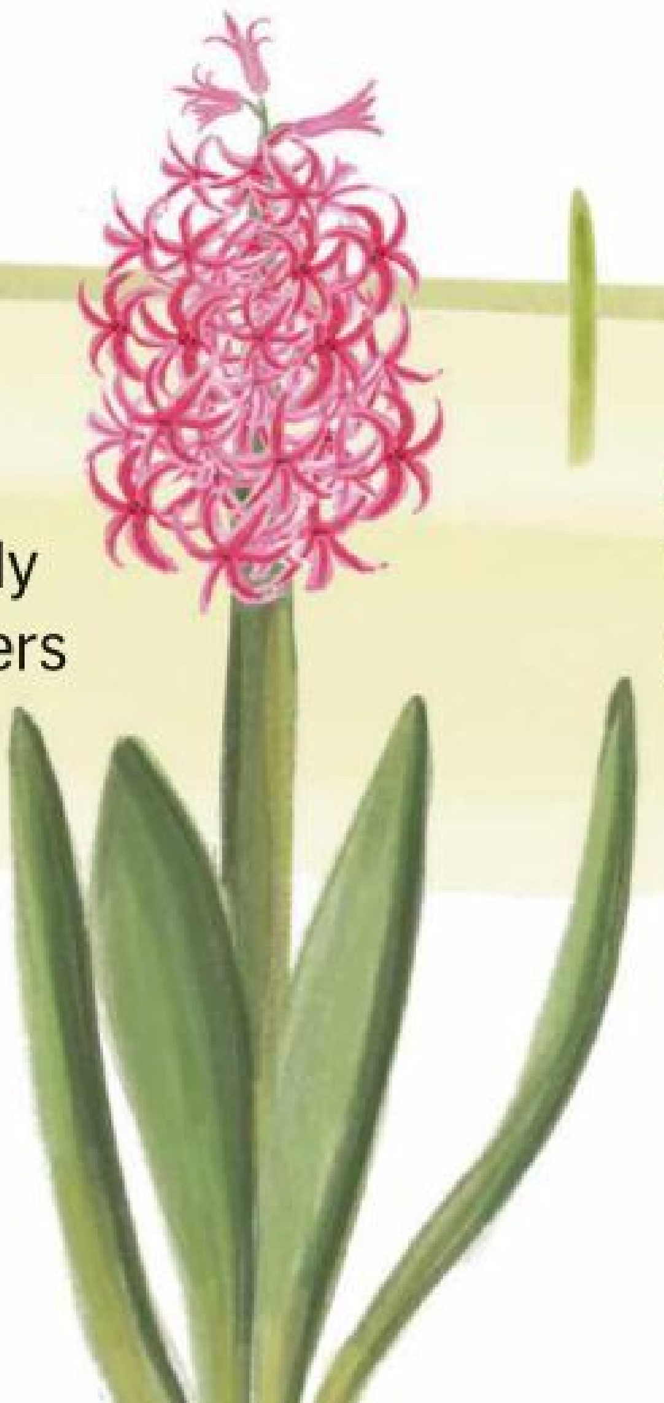
## MARCH to APRIL

**The daffodils storm in** and a smattering of snowflakes and hyacinths join the party, too. Mid-spring is all about jubilant moments… indoors and out. Grow, pick, rejoice, repeat.

**23** ***Ipheion* 'Rolf Fiedler'** is prized for its small, soft-blue, star flowers. Likes a sunny spot

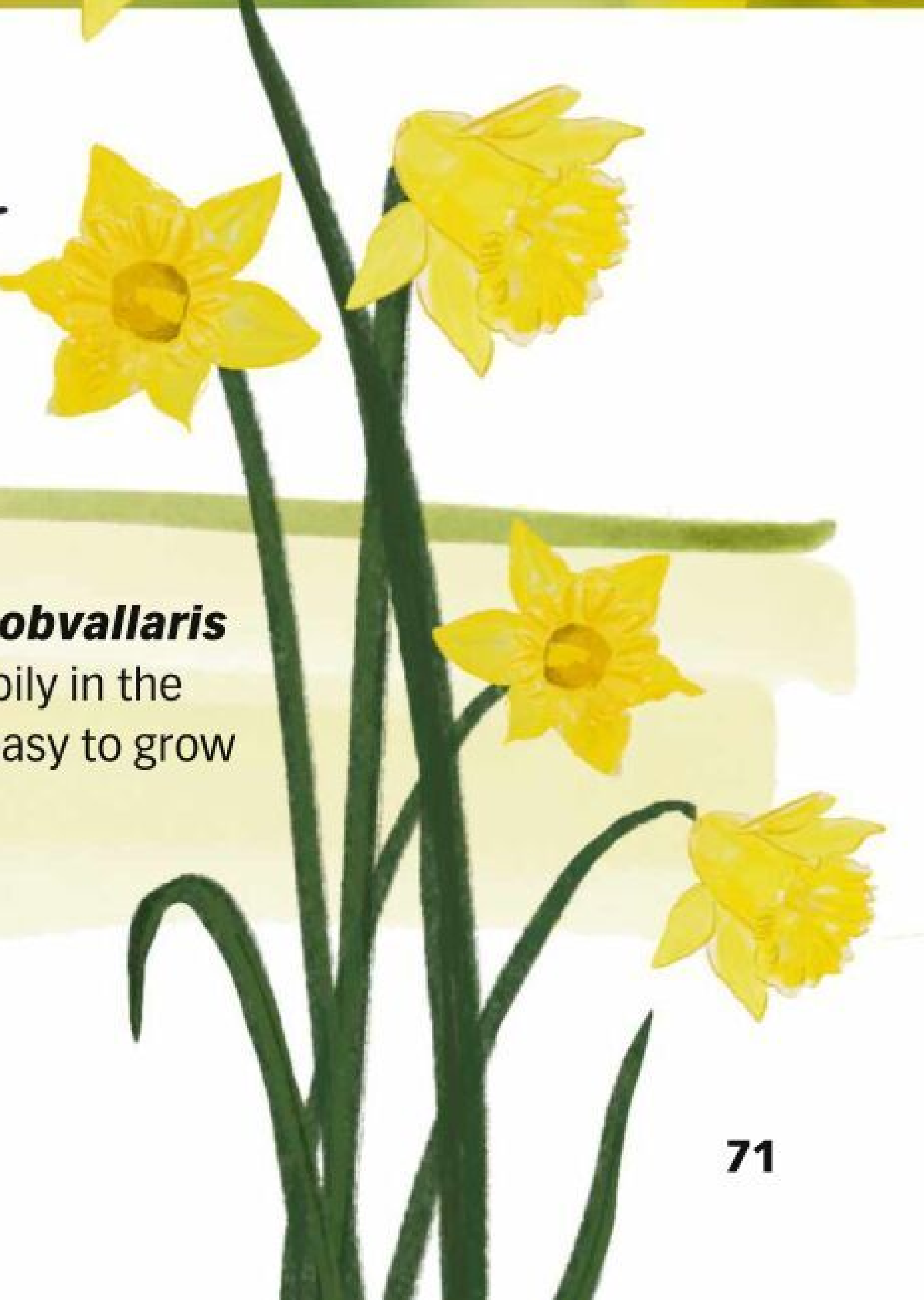
starflowers

**24** ***Hyacinthus* 'Anna Marie'** brightens the season with its sweetly scented, pastel-pink flowers

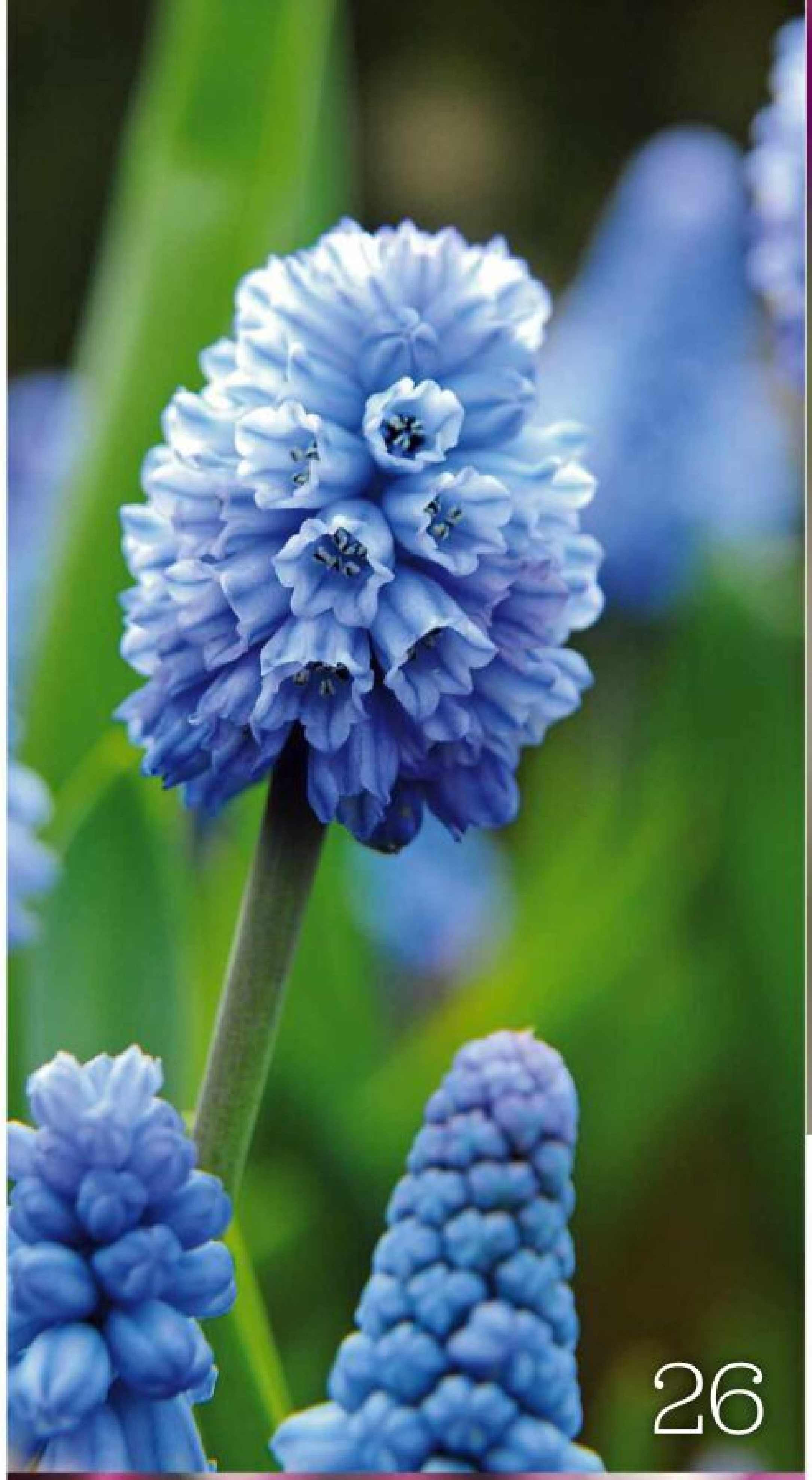


hyacinth

**25** ***Narcissus obvallaris*** will spread happily in the garden, and is easy to grow



daffodils



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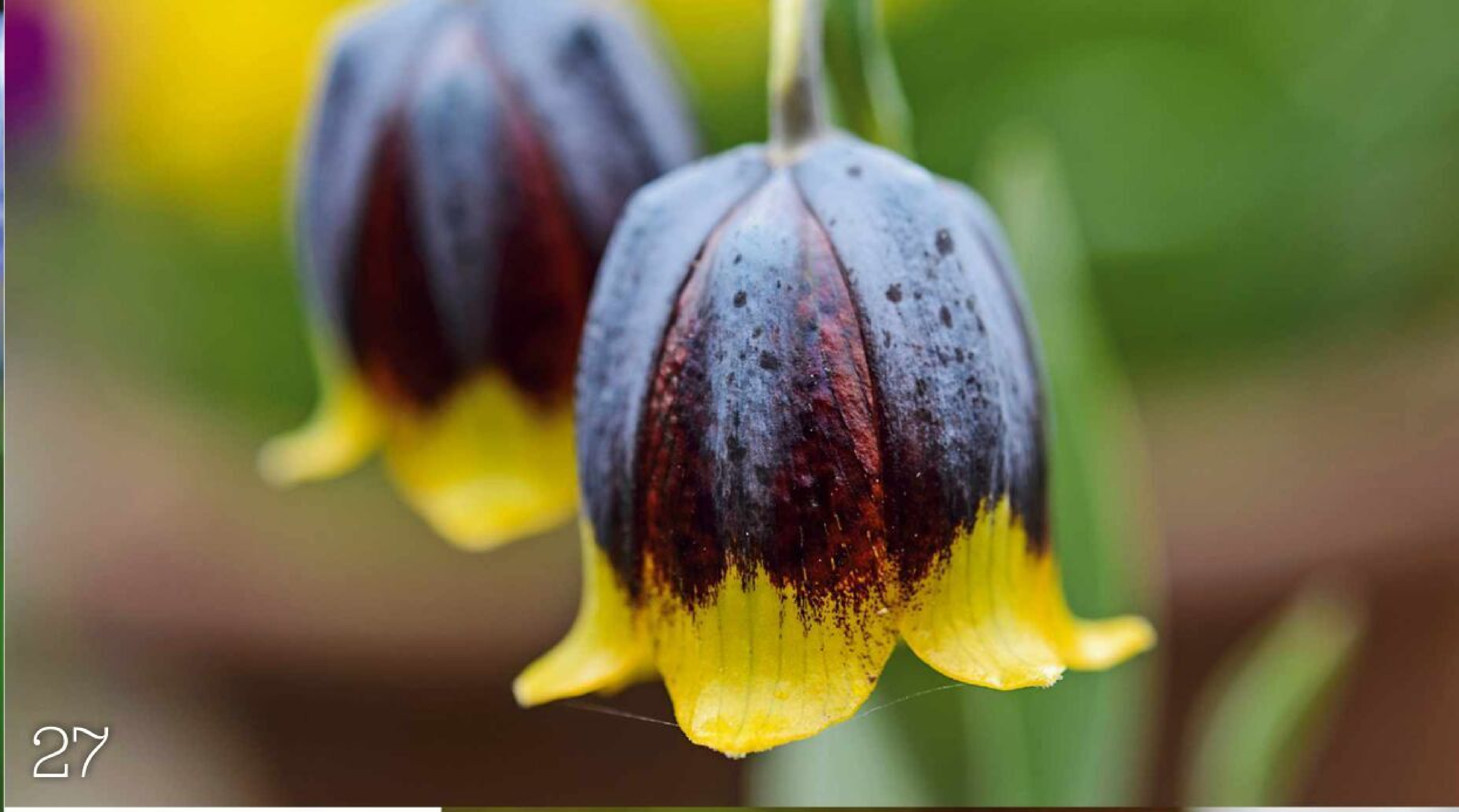

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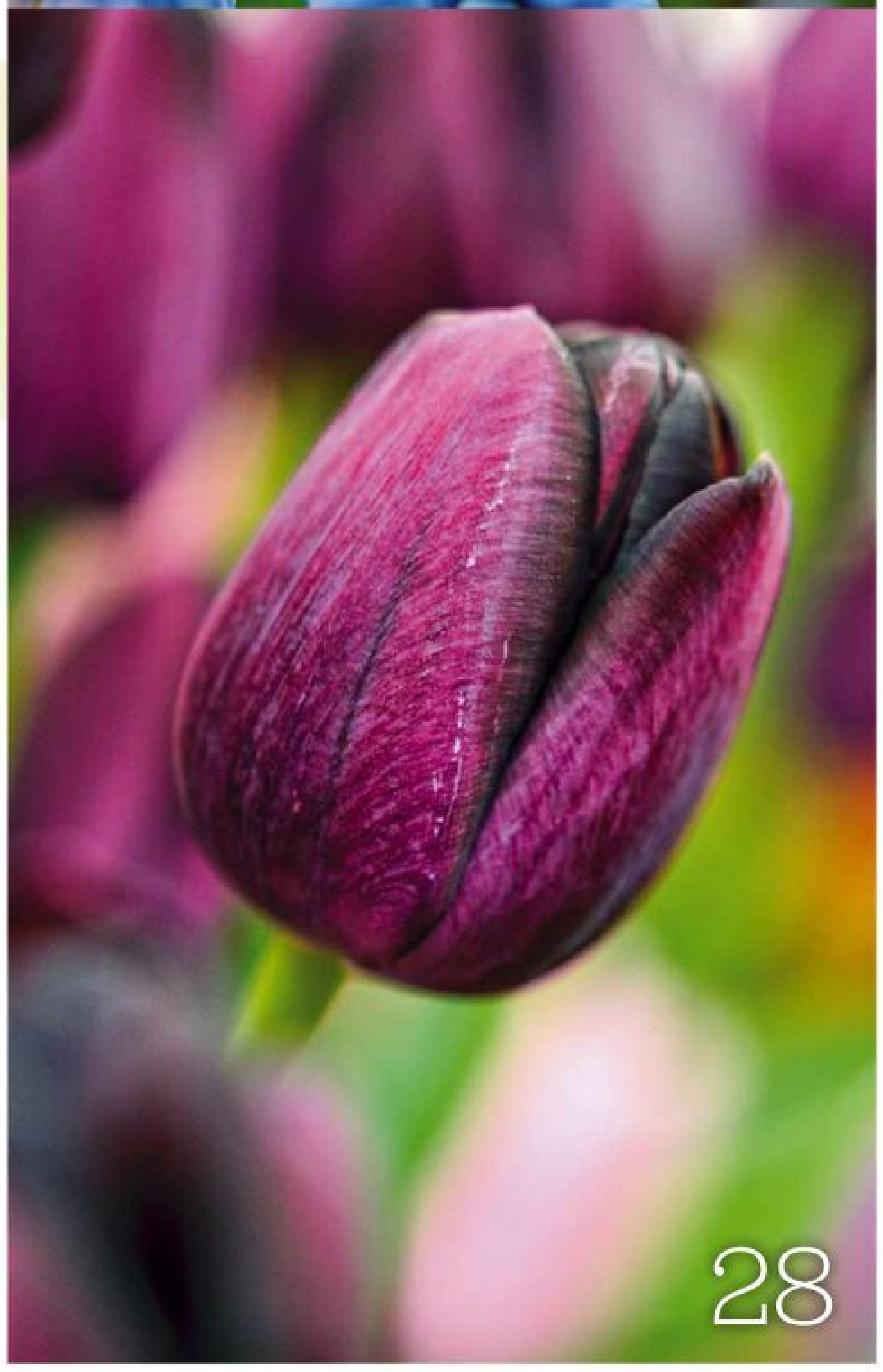

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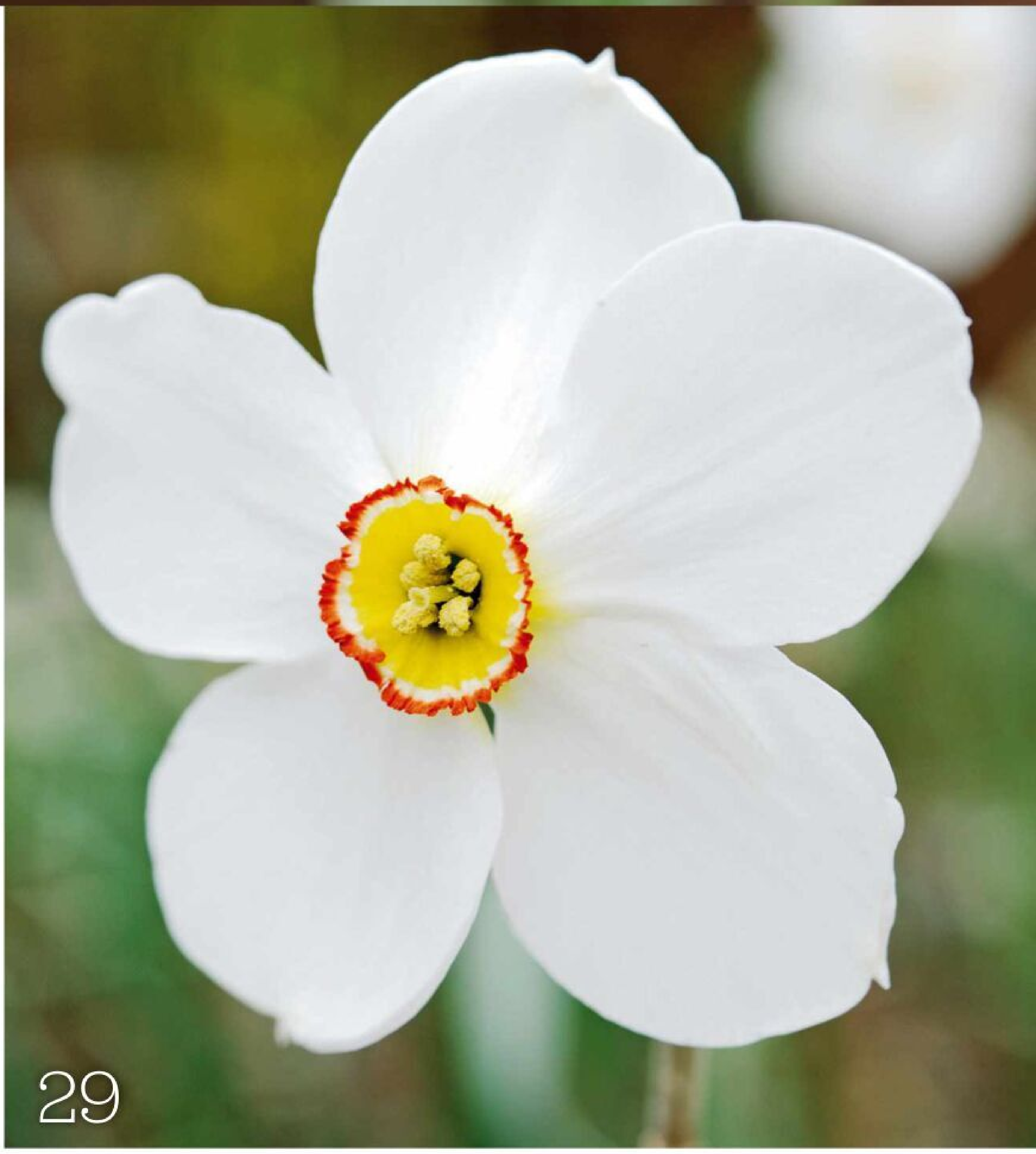

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ILLUSTRATIONS: SARAH SMART DRAWS. PHOTOS: TORIE CHUGG; SARAH CUTTLE; JASON INGRAM; TIM SANDALL

**26** ***Muscari azureum***
Short, dainty cones will lend an interesting, painterly blue to planting schemes. Prefers full sun and good drainage.
**H x S** 10cm x 10cm

**27** ***Fritillaria michailovskyi***
Moody, two-tone bonnets dangling from slender stems. Thrives in full sun and dislikes wet soil when dormant.
**H x S** 20cm x 10cm

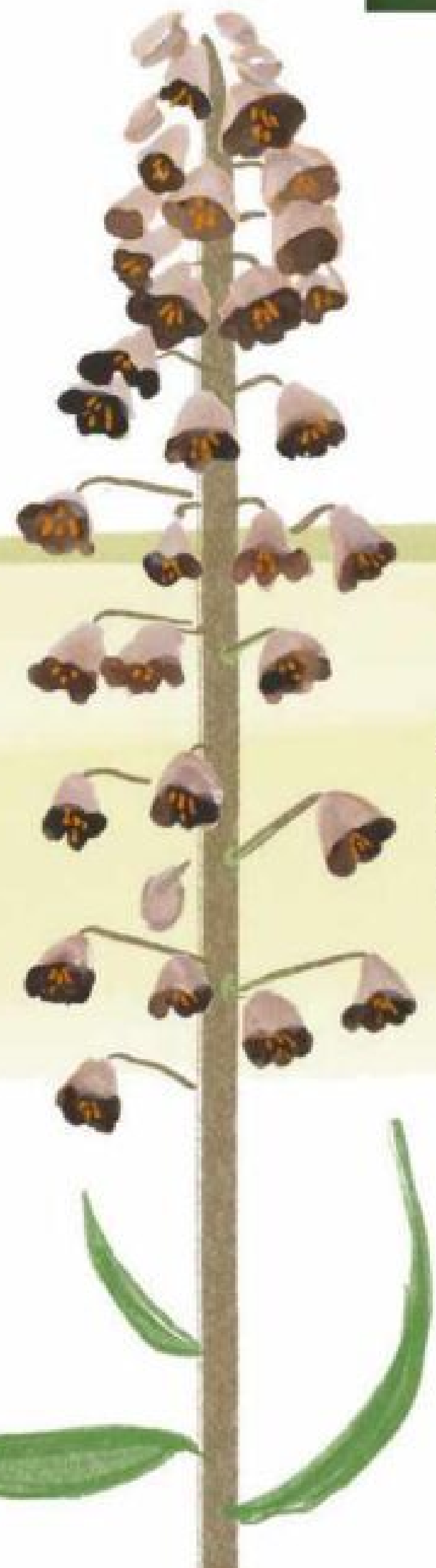
**28** ***Tulipa* 'Queen of Night'**
Stick to this deepest almost-black hue for a refined display, or alternatively partner with just one other tall, light-coloured, mid-spring tulip variety for contrast.
**H x S** 60cm x 10cm

**29** ***Narcissus poeticus***
This elegant, late-flowering daffodil is perfect for the vase, but also naturalises well. Grows in sun or part shade and prefers moist, free-draining soil.
**H x S** 40cm x 15cm

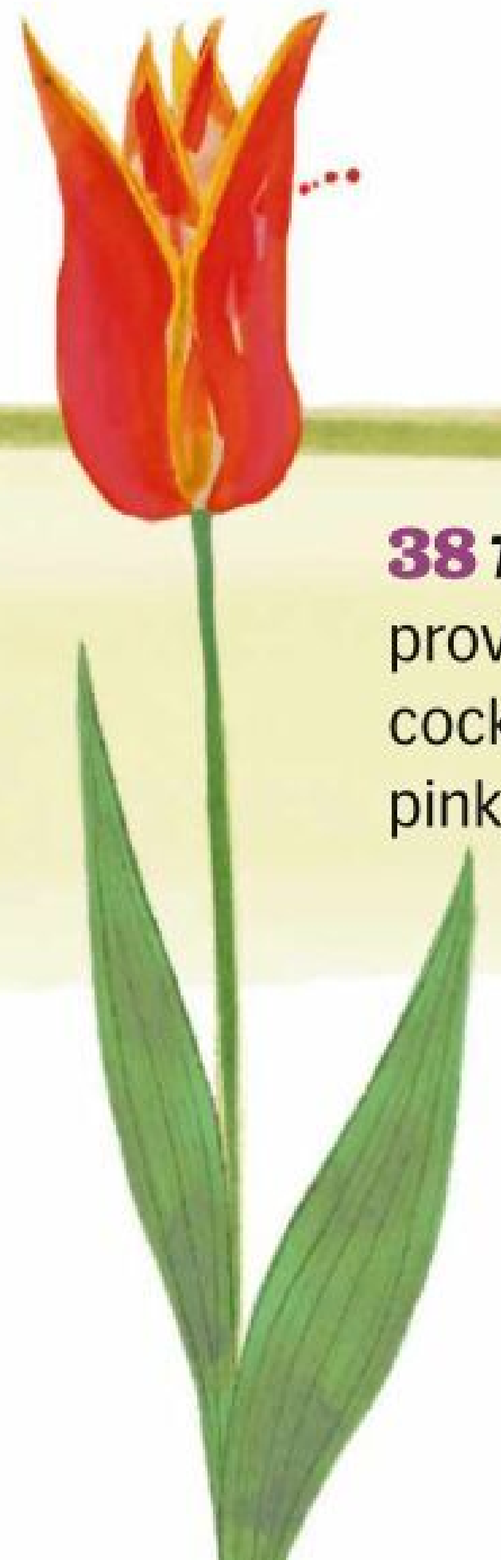
## APRIL to MAY

**Let grape hyacinths**, fancy fritillaries and late daffodils be the foil to the main event – a showcase of star tulips. Mix tones for exuberance or plant up with one variety en masse.

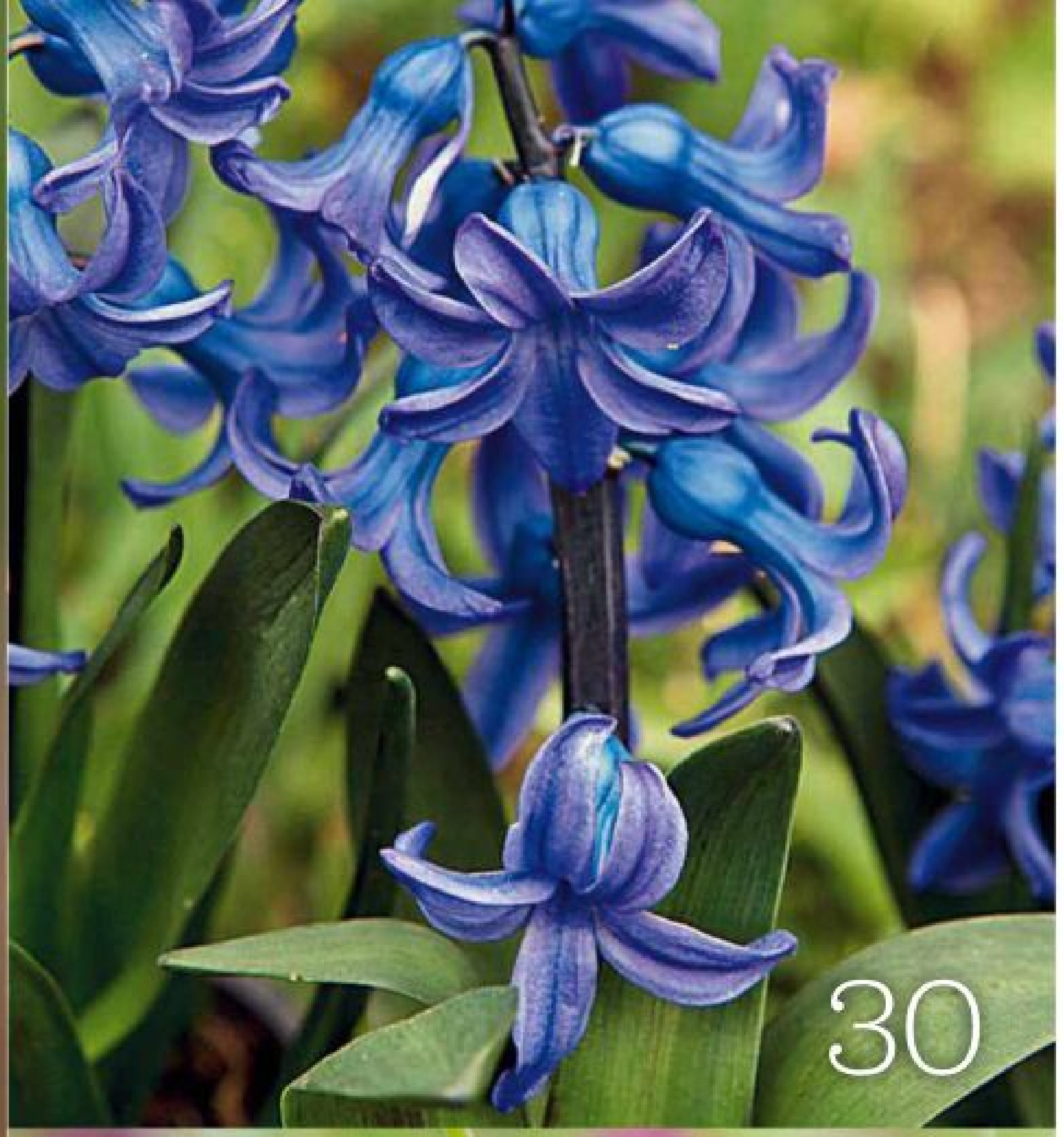
**36** ***Tulipa* 'Evergreen'** is a statuesque, zingy, all-green tulip, giving a hit of freshness



**37** ***Fritillaria persica*** has plenty of interest with black, pendant bells



**38** ***Tulipa* 'Request'** provides a scented, sunset cocktail of sweet pastel-pinks and oranges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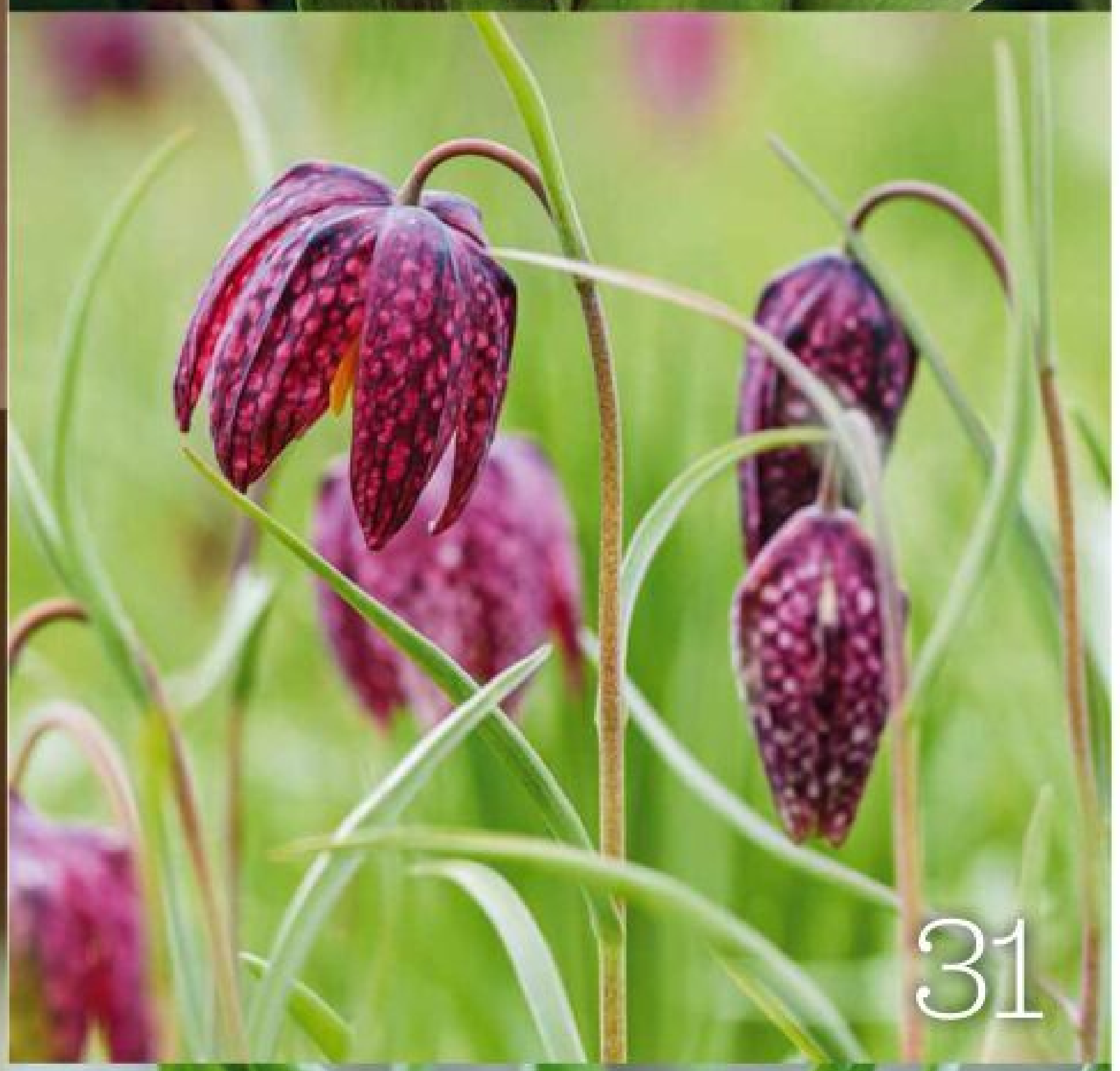
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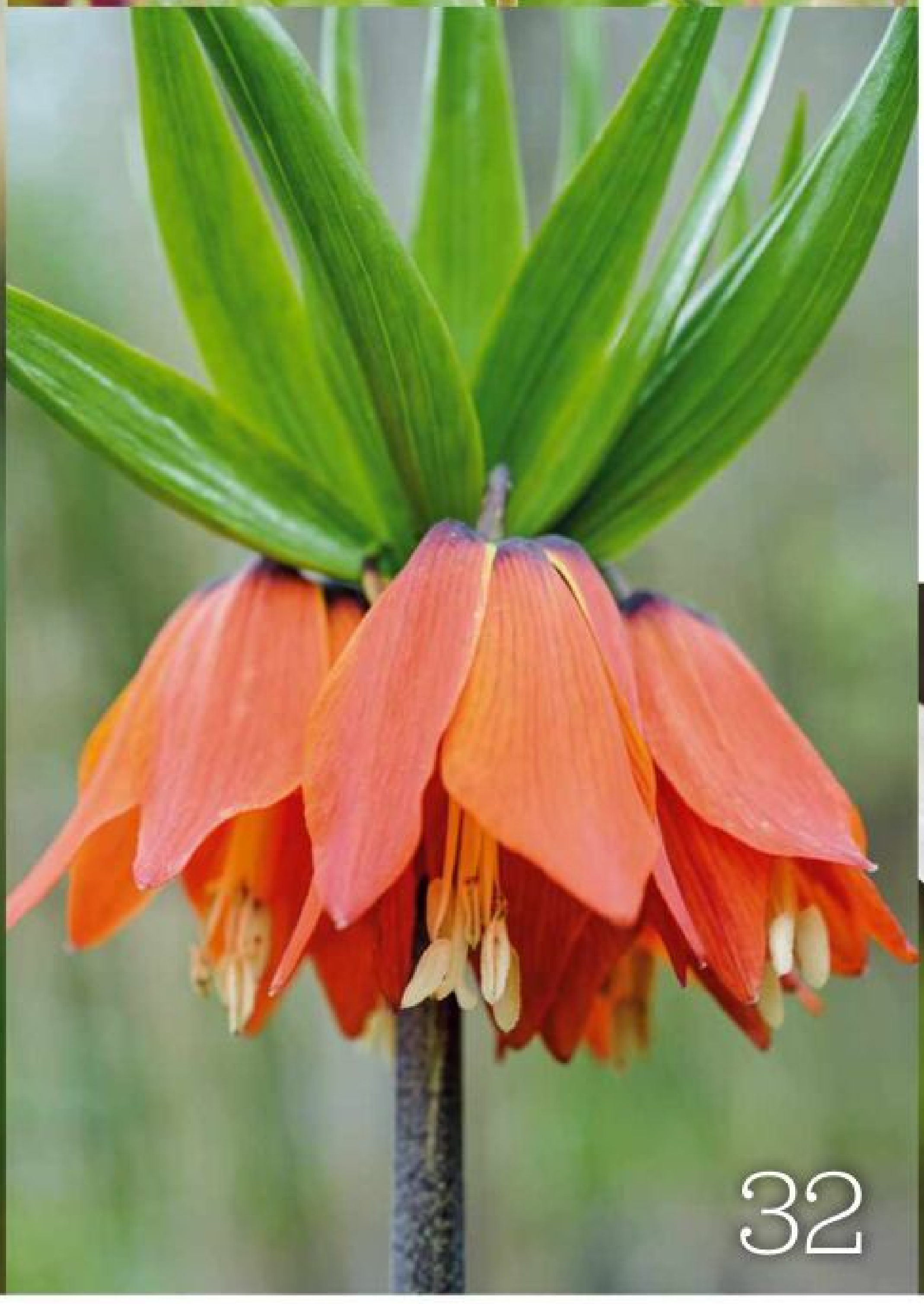
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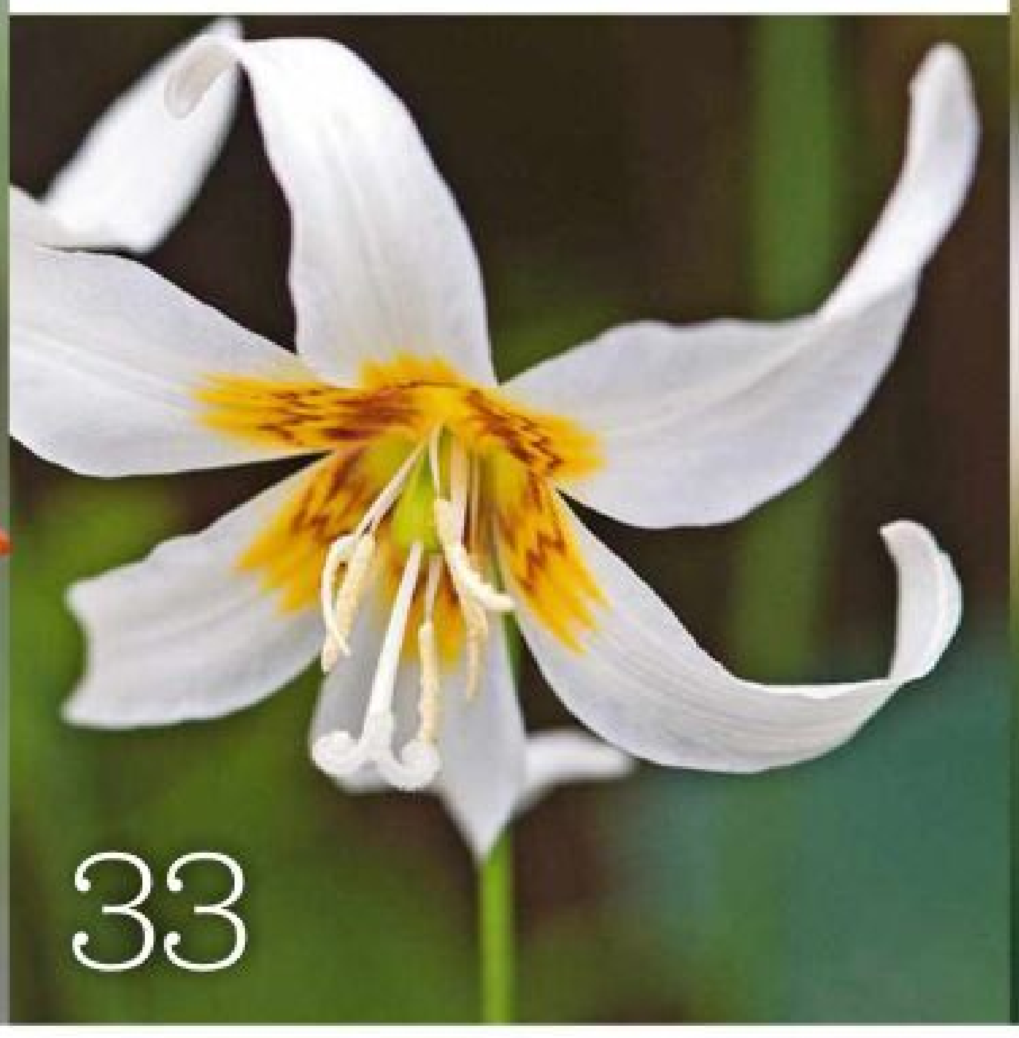
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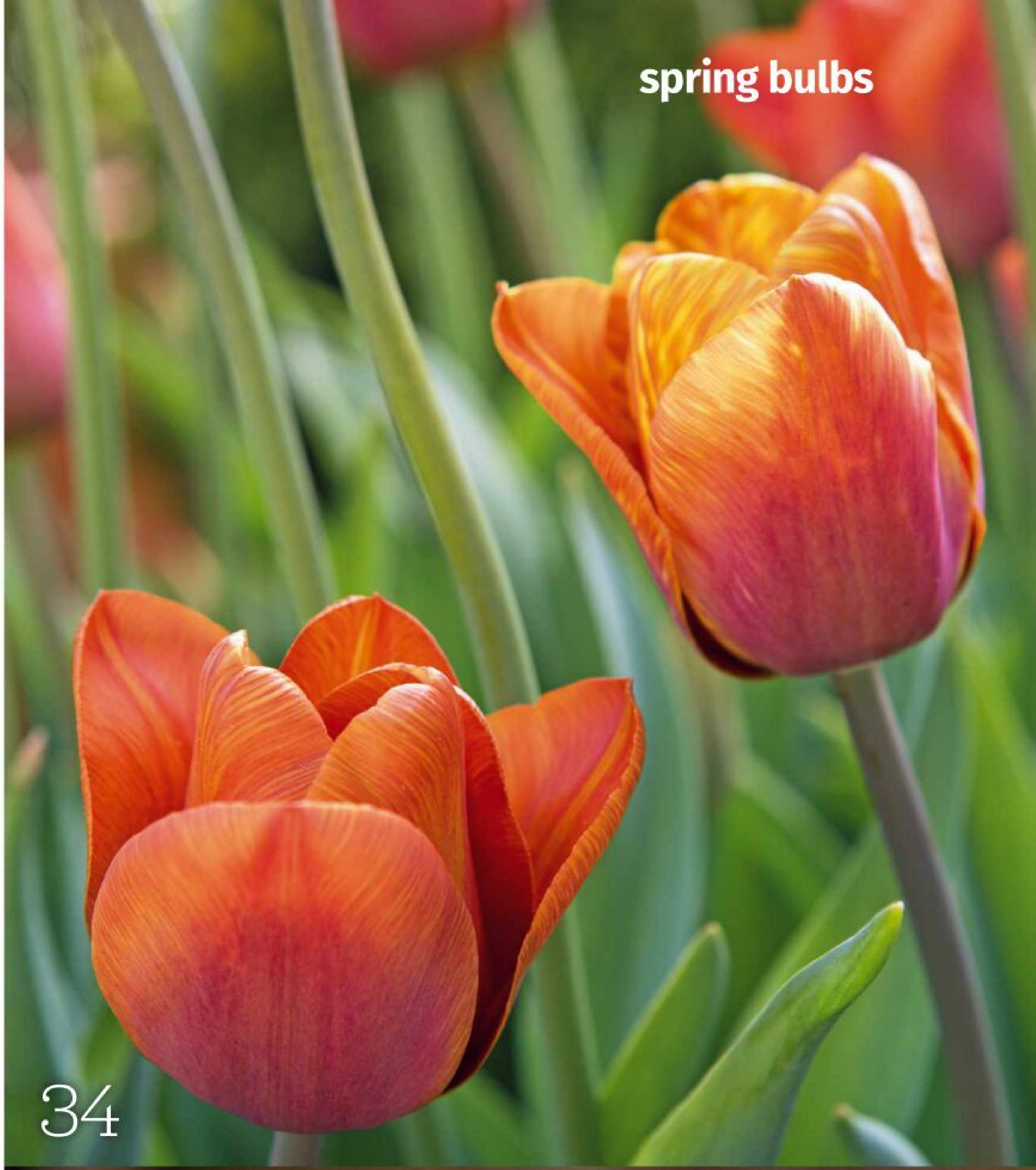
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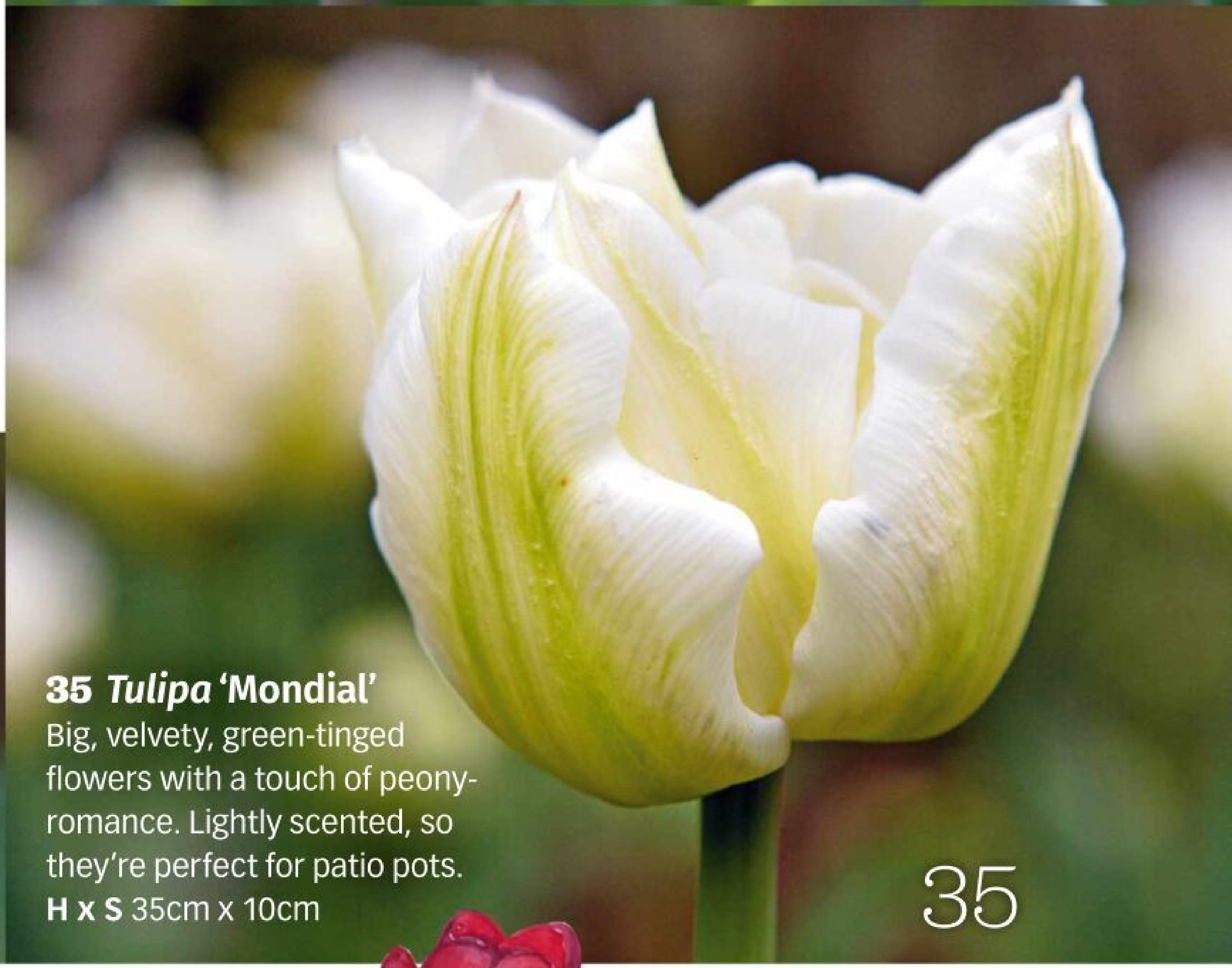
**30** ***Hyacinthus orientalis* 'Delft Blue'**
A traditional hyacinth with plenty of character and oodles of scent. Robust flower stems make this hyacinth less likely to flop over than some others.
**H x S** 30cm x 20cm

**31** ***Fritillaria meleagris***
With its distinguished chequers, the snake's-head fritillary is equal parts jazzy and elegant.
**H x S** 30cm x 10cm

**32** ***Fritillaria imperialis* 'Rubra'**
A million miles from its cousin the snake's-head fritillary, the crown imperial towers above the neighbours with a regal air.
**H x S** 70cm x 20cm

**33** ***Erythronium californicum***
With creamy-white flowers on tall, upright stems, it thrives in shade. The broad, marbled foliage adds character.
**H x S** 30cm x 25cm

**34** ***Tulipa* 'Cairo'**
Use this fiery, flame-orange to overhaul any pot or border. As with all tulips, it fares better if planted toward autumn's end.
**H x S** 45cm x 10cm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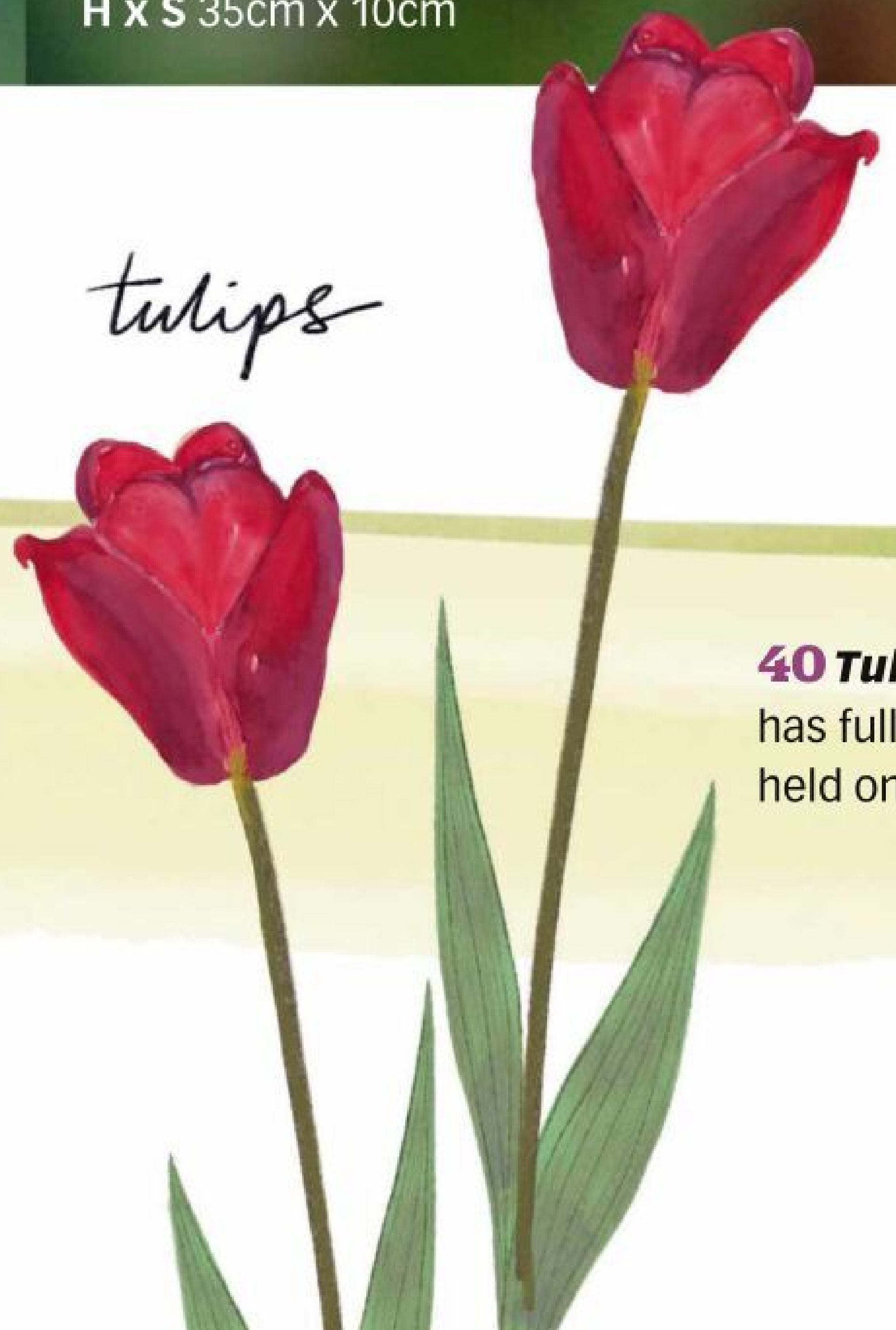
**35** ***Tulipa* 'Mondial'**
Big, velvety, green-tinged flowers with a touch of peony-romance. Lightly scented, so they're perfect for patio pots.
**H x S** 35cm x 10cm

squills

**39** ***Scilla siberica*** is a wild, woodland-blue, and spreads freely once established in the ground

tulips



**40** ***Tulipa* 'Jan Reus'** has full, crimson flowers, held on red-tinged stems

**41** ***Tulipa* 'Black Parrot'** Your borders and pots will be steeped in character. Repeat-flowers in the right spot. **H x S** 45cm x 10cm

**42 *Allium christophii*** A jumbo 20cm flowerhead makes this the supreme ornamental onion. The show starts from the end of May, carrying through with structural seedheads into summer. **H x S** 60cm x 20cm

**43 *Tulipa* 'Spring Green'** Pale green stripes strike upwards through ivory petals, giving all-white schemes a twist. **H x S** 40cm x 10cm

**44 *Tulipa* 'Oviedo'** For a change from the more stately tulips, opt for this one's textured candy-pink frills. **H x S** 45cm x 20cm

**45 *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation'** Popular for its strong silhouette and deep-purple display. Less overpowering when partnered with other, lighter-coloured alliums of a similar height. **H x S** 1m x 10cm

ILLUSTRATIONS: SARAH SMART DRAWS. PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS; FARMER GRACY; JASON INGRAM; TIM SANDALL. LOCATION: WEST DEAN GARDENS, W SUSSEX.

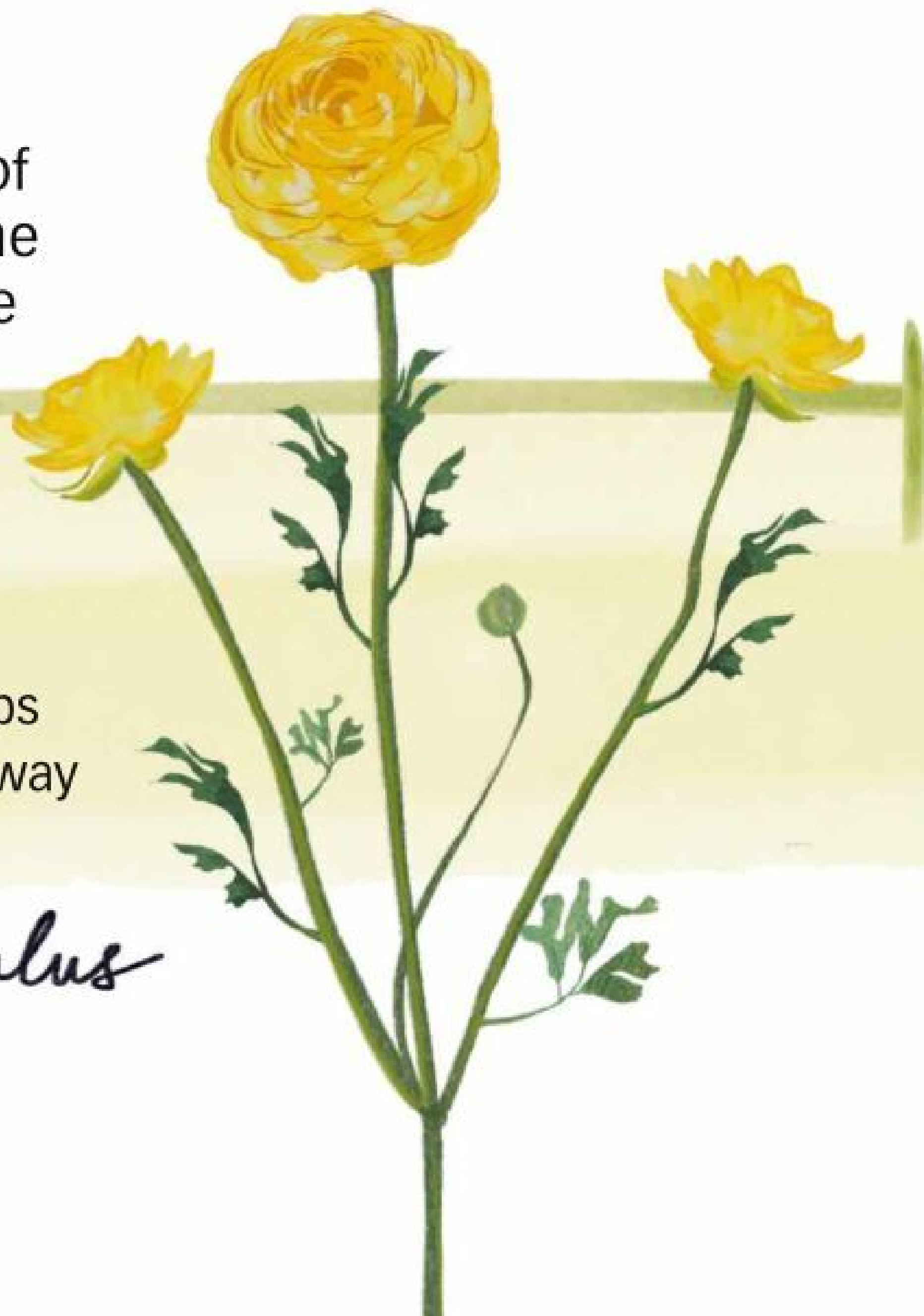
## MAY

**Celebrate near-summer** with more tulips, plus a troop of alliums and ranunculus. Plan ahead, with potted bulbs in the wings: as one plant dies back, others can take centre-stage

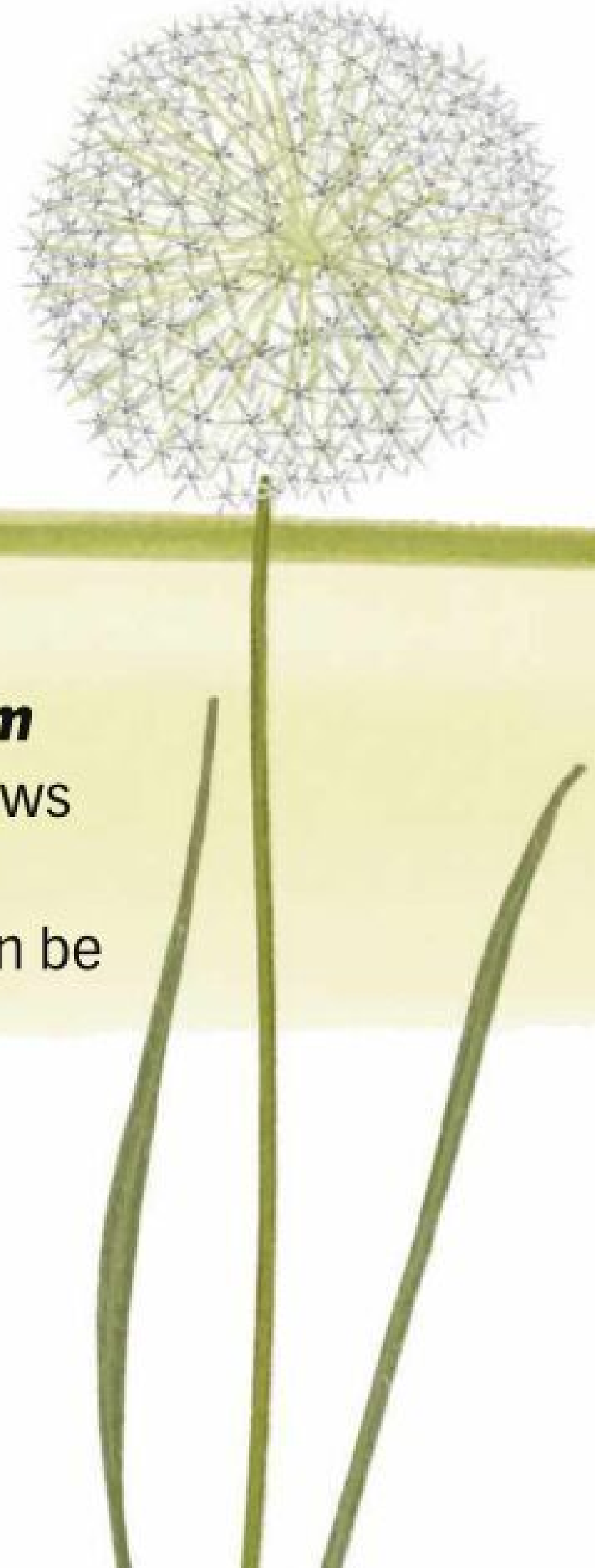
**50 *Tulipa* 'La Belle Époque'** ticks the trend for creamy coffee-shades nicely

tulips

**51 *Ranunculus* hybrids** – bold, classic florists' Persian buttercups are back in a big way



**52 *Allium stipitatum* 'Mount Everest'** shows just how eye-catching white globe alliums can be



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49

**46** ***Tulipa* 'Wisley'**
A bright yellow base cuts cleanly through the silky, poker-red petals. Tall enough to rise above much of May's fresh growth.
**H x S** 50cm x 10cm

**47** ***Nectaroscordum siculum***
The deliciously-named Sicilian honey garlic, with cream, pink and green starburst umbels topping the tallest stems.
**H x S** 1.2m x 10cm

**48** ***Convallaria majalis***
Brings cool freshness to a shady spot, spreading happily to serve as useful ground cover.
**H x S** 25cm x 30cm

**49** ***Tulipa* 'Copper Image'**
A frenzy of copper-hued petals creates a stunning jumbo bloom with layers of petals and deeply textured colours.
**H x S** 40cm x 10cm

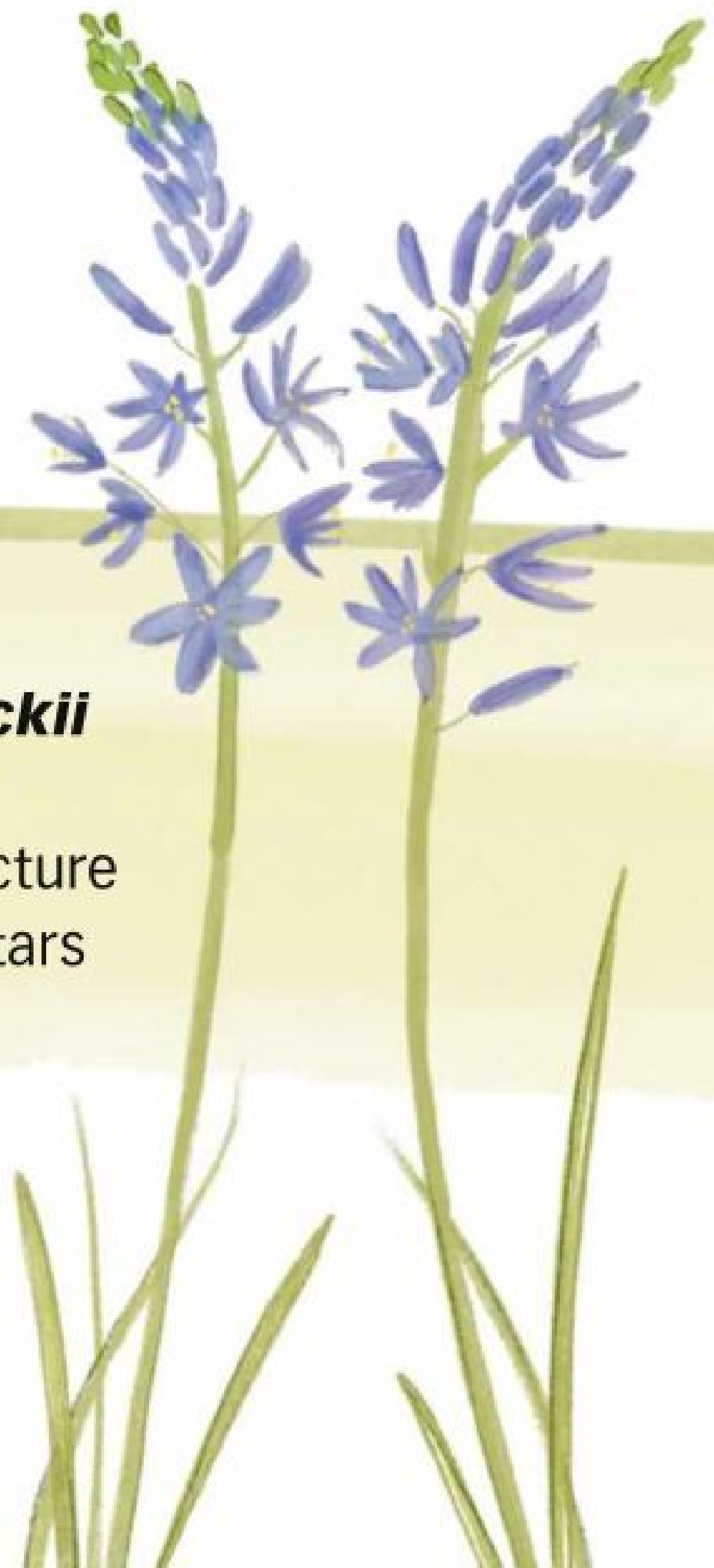
*For Monty's practical bulb-planting guide, turn to page 32*

## Where to buy

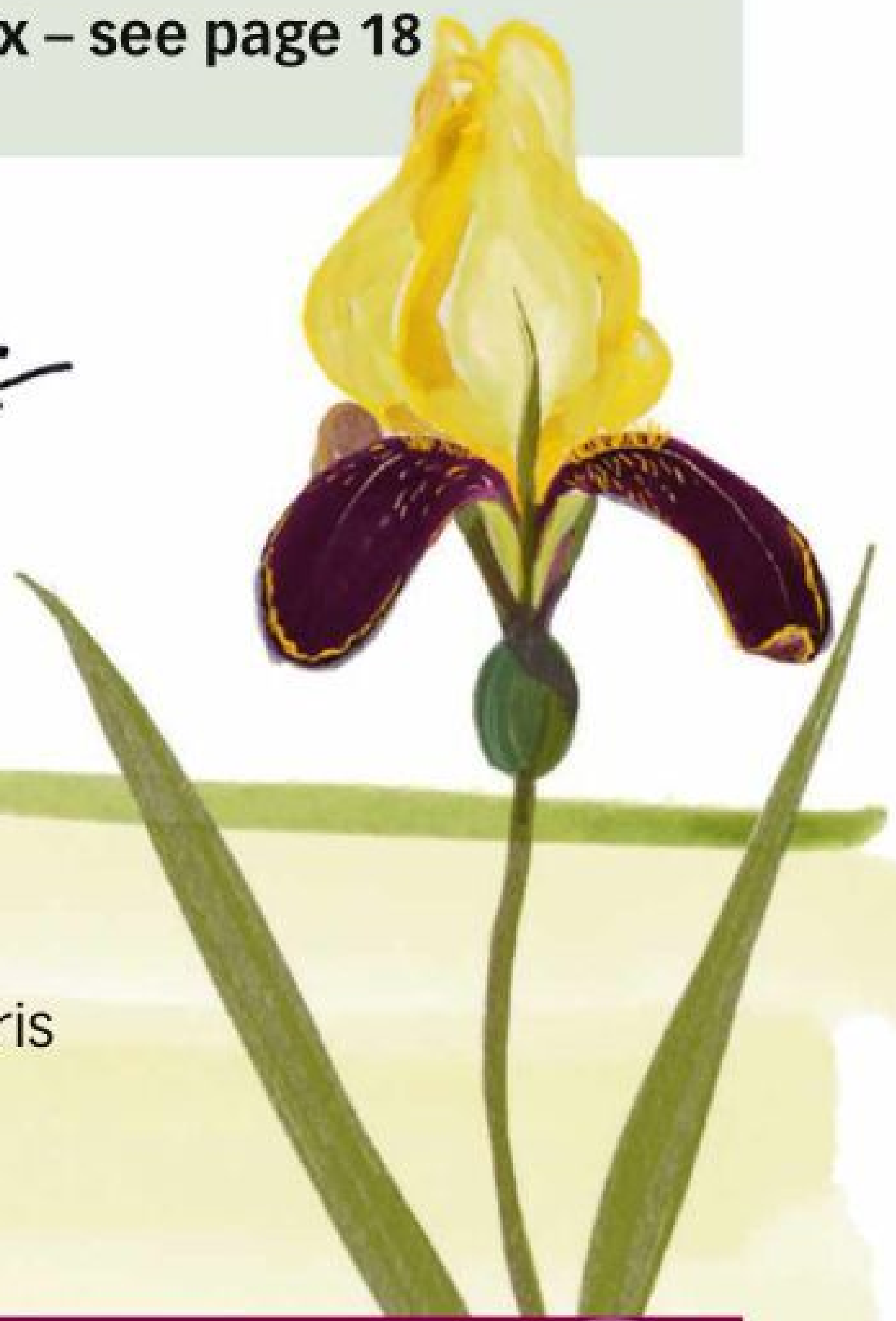
- **Crocus** crocus.co.uk
- **Farmer Gracy** farmergracy.co.uk
- **Gee Tee Bulb Company** gee-tee.co.uk
- **Hayloft** hayloft.co.uk
- **J Parkers** jparkers.co.uk
- **Peter Nyssen** peternyssen.com
- **Sarah Raven** sarahraven.com
- **You Garden** yougarden.com
- **Suttons** suttons.co.uk
- **Thompson & Morgan** thompson-morgan.com

**Don't miss this month's reader offer: get 15 FREE allium bulbs with every order of Sweet William Mix – see page 18**

**53** ***Tulipa* 'Flaming Spring Green'**
adds big contrast with red and green streaks



**54** ***Camassia cusickii* 'Zwanenburg'**
offers a dose of structure with lofty spires of stars



**55** ***Iris* 'Rajah'**
is a tall bearded iris with unbeatable two-tone petals

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/plant-bulbs** for more on the best bulbs to plant this autumn

**RENAISSANCE**

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# Introducing

## The new heart and soul of your garden.

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They have designed their BBQ cabins in the traditional Finnish style, from sustainably sourced, slow-grown Scandinavian Redwood Spruce. This is a tried and tested material which is both visually stunning and durable.

Their trademarked sloping wall design not only gives the cabins an unmistakable silhouette, it also makes them very comfortable, enabling you to sit back and relax whilst enjoying countless days and nights with your favourite people throughout the whole year!

But they aren't just for barbecuing in! Their owners use their cabins as an escape from the world outside. Whether that's as an extra space for the family to reconnect, or as the perfect setting for your Christmas party!

Arctic Cabins manufacture their buildings in their dedicated factories in Derbyshire and are so confident in the quality of the craftsmanship that they offer a comprehensive 10 year manufacturer's guarantee.

Visit their large open-air show site just off junction 25 of the M1 home to a full range of BBQ huts, Garden Rooms, Home Offices, Garden Bars & Gyms. Chat with one of the team about their extensive range of building sizes and options.

**For more information on their BBQ Huts & Garden Rooms, visit their website www.arcticcabins.co.uk or call a member of the team on 0115 932 8888.**

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BEST BUY

# Planting kit essentials

As the autumn planting season arrives, **Kay Maguire** looks at the tools you'll need and key features to look for, and reveals the Best Buys chosen by our expert testers

Introducing new plants into our gardens is always an exciting process, and whether they're trees, shrubs, bulbs or herbaceous perennials, it's vital to give them the best start for their continued health and success.

Planting them well, in aerated soil and at the right depth, is crucial, and there are several tools designed to help you do this. The *Gardeners' World Magazine* reviews team regularly tests planting tools to ensure you can buy new kit with confidence and choose the right tools for each planting task.

From forks and spades that help you break up the soil, dig holes and lift plants, to trowels for planting in pots and raised beds, we've reviewed a whole host of tools, giving our coveted Best Buy award to those that were outstanding. Every tool on the next three pages is a Best Buy-winner, so if you want new tools for planting this autumn, read on to discover our recommendations.

PHOTO: SARAH CUTTLE

# Hand trowels

Trowels are invaluable for planting, making seed drills, weeding and potting on. With a wooden or plastic handle and a stainless-steel, carbon-steel or plastic blade, these are hard-working tools.

But they're not all the same – some are designed for specific tasks or soils. The blade can be long and narrow for working in tight spots or with deep-rooted plants, pointed for digging hard soil, or scooped for transplanting. Wider, flatter trowels are best for planting and digging. Look for a long tang (the neck that joins the blade to the handle) if you have hard ground, as it gives you greater leverage. If you'll be working for long periods, choose a handle that is shaped for comfort with a rounded end.

**1 Best all-rounder**
**Kent & Stowe Capability Trowel**
**£14.99**

Built to last, it has a pointed stainless-steel blade with depth markings and both serrated and sharpened edges, so it can cut through roots and open compost bags. The handle is shaped and comfy, made from FSC-certified ash. Its hammer end can be used to tap in stakes.
**marshallsgarden.com**

**2 Best for quality and value**
**DeWit Professional Planting Trowel**
**£17.99**

This strong, hand-crafted trowel has a shaped, carbon-steel blade with tempered sides and a pointed tip. The FSC-certified ash handle is comfortable, and the trowel feels weighty and solid, capable of handling most jobs. It's great value for the quality of design and performance.
**crocus.co.uk**

**3 Best premium performer**
**Niwaki Moku Trowel**
**£59 (small), £69 (large)**

An investment piece, this trowel is worth saving up for. Hand forged in Japan, the carbon-steel blade has a pointed tip and sharpened edges, and the wooden handle sits comfortably in the hand. Available in small or large, it digs, plants and weeds effortlessly.
**niwaki.com**

**4 Best traditional trowel**
**Wilkinson Sword Stainless Steel Hand Trowel**
**£11.99**

A great value, traditional-style trowel that feels light and well balanced. Its scooped, sharpened, stainless-steel blade cuts through soil efficiently. The weatherproofed ash handle is comfy.
**wilkinsonsword-tools.co.uk**

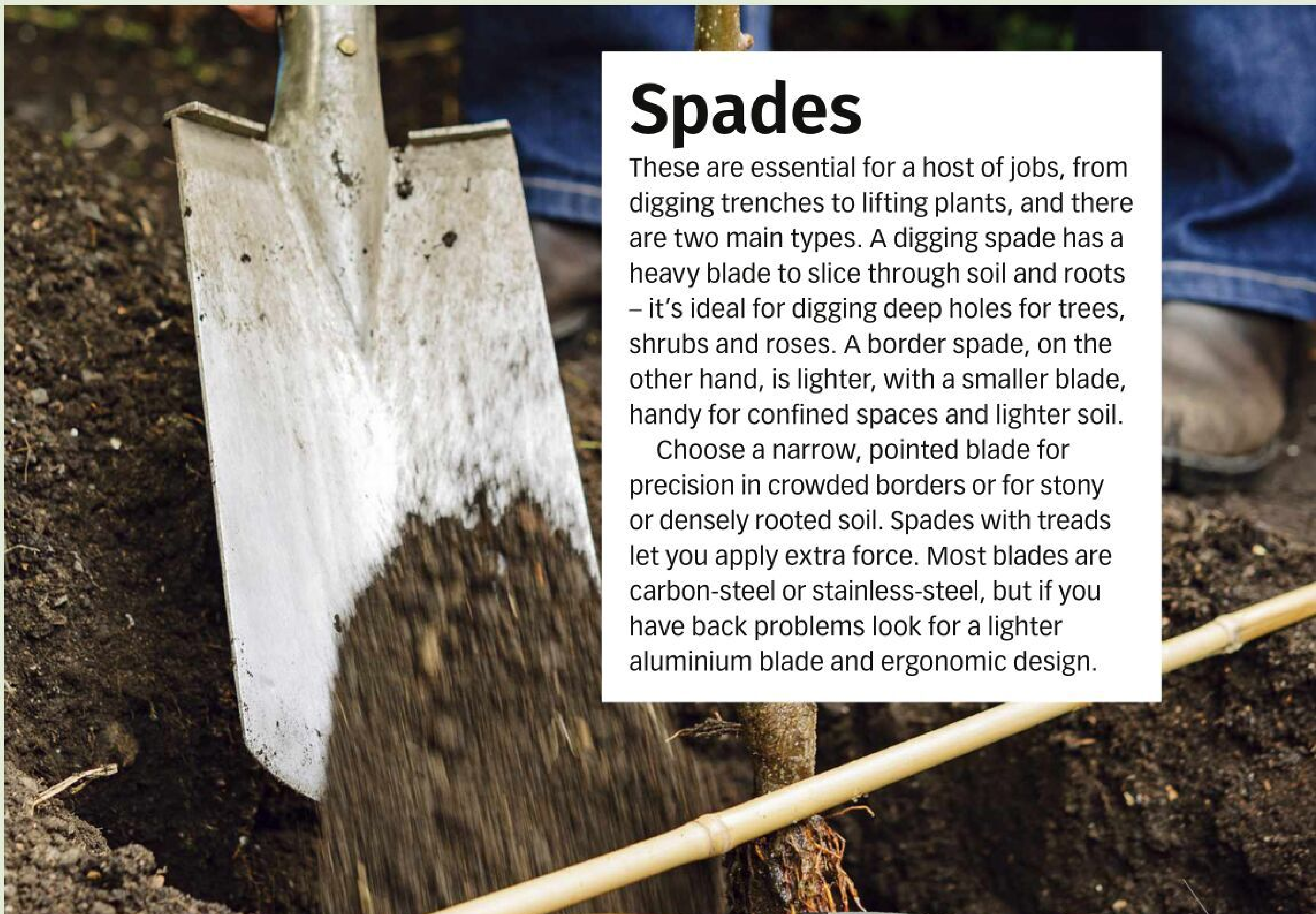
PHOTOS: JASON INGRAM

1
Kent & Stowe
10cm
4"
3"
5cm
2"
1"

2

3

4
WILKINSON SWORD



# Spades

These are essential for a host of jobs, from digging trenches to lifting plants, and there are two main types. A digging spade has a heavy blade to slice through soil and roots – it's ideal for digging deep holes for trees, shrubs and roses. A border spade, on the other hand, is lighter, with a smaller blade, handy for confined spaces and lighter soil.

Choose a narrow, pointed blade for precision in crowded borders or for stony or densely rooted soil. Spades with treads let you apply extra force. Most blades are carbon-steel or stainless-steel, but if you have back problems look for a lighter aluminium blade and ergonomic design.

## 1 Best border spade

**Greenman Half Brite Border Spade**
**£38.95**

This traditional-style border spade has a strong, treaded, carbon-steel blade that has been left uncoated at the base so it can be sharpened. With a long, robust socket to prevent snapping, it feels balanced and comfortable. The long, FSC-certified ash shaft is easy on the back.
**greenmangardentools.com**

## 2 Best ergonomic design

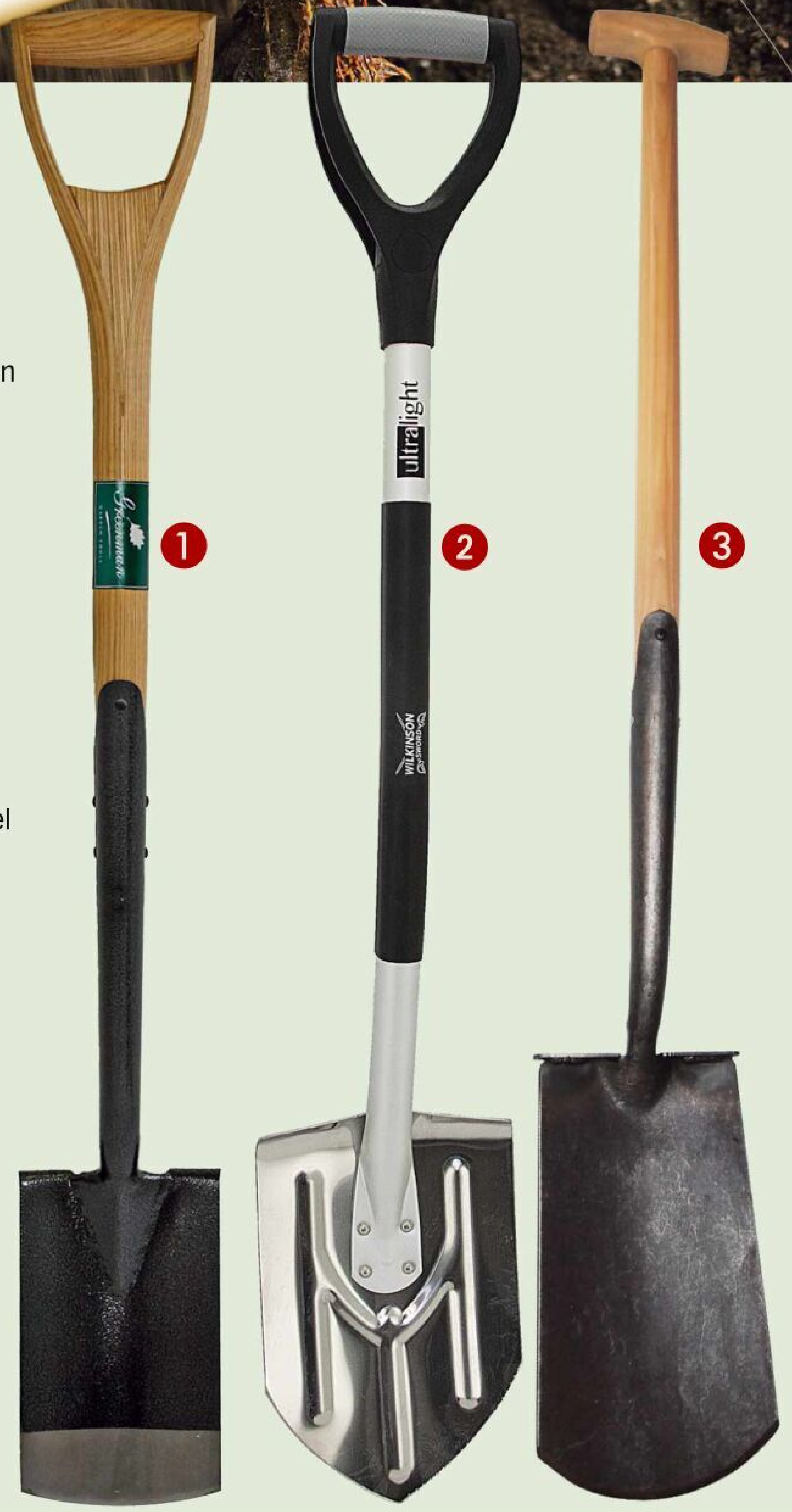
**Wilkinson Sword Ultralight Digging Spade**
**£35.99**

Much lighter than a traditional spade, this tool has a pointed, serrated, stainless-steel blade and an aluminium shaft. It's easy to handle and, despite its low weight, feels substantial. It's ideal for longer jobs and less-able gardeners.
**wilkinsonsword-tools.co.uk**

## 3 Best premium digging spade

**DeWit Solid Socket Spade**
**£54.99**

A tough, traditional-style digging spade that feels sturdy and capable, with a solid forged, carbon-steel blade, a long socket and an oiled, ash shaft and T-grip handle. Built to last, it is also comfortable to use.
**crocus.co.uk**



# Bulb planters

This handy tool features a tapered hollow cone that you push into the ground to remove a core of soil. Pop the bulb in the hole, then put the core back in place. Bulb planters can be especially useful when working among other plants or in turf, as they don't disturb the surrounding soil.

They are usually made from carbon steel, stainless steel or plastic, and some have a long handle. Look for a serrated base if cutting through turf or harder soil. A trigger-release helps drops the core back into the hole, and depth markings are also useful.

### 1 Best compact planter

**Gardena Bulb Planter**
**£12.99**

This sturdy, well-designed planter is easy to use and has a comfy handle. Made from rust-resistant steel with a serrated end and depth markings, it glides into the soil without sticking. A flick of the trigger drops the soil core back over the bulb.
**gardena.com/uk**

### 2 Best long-handled planter

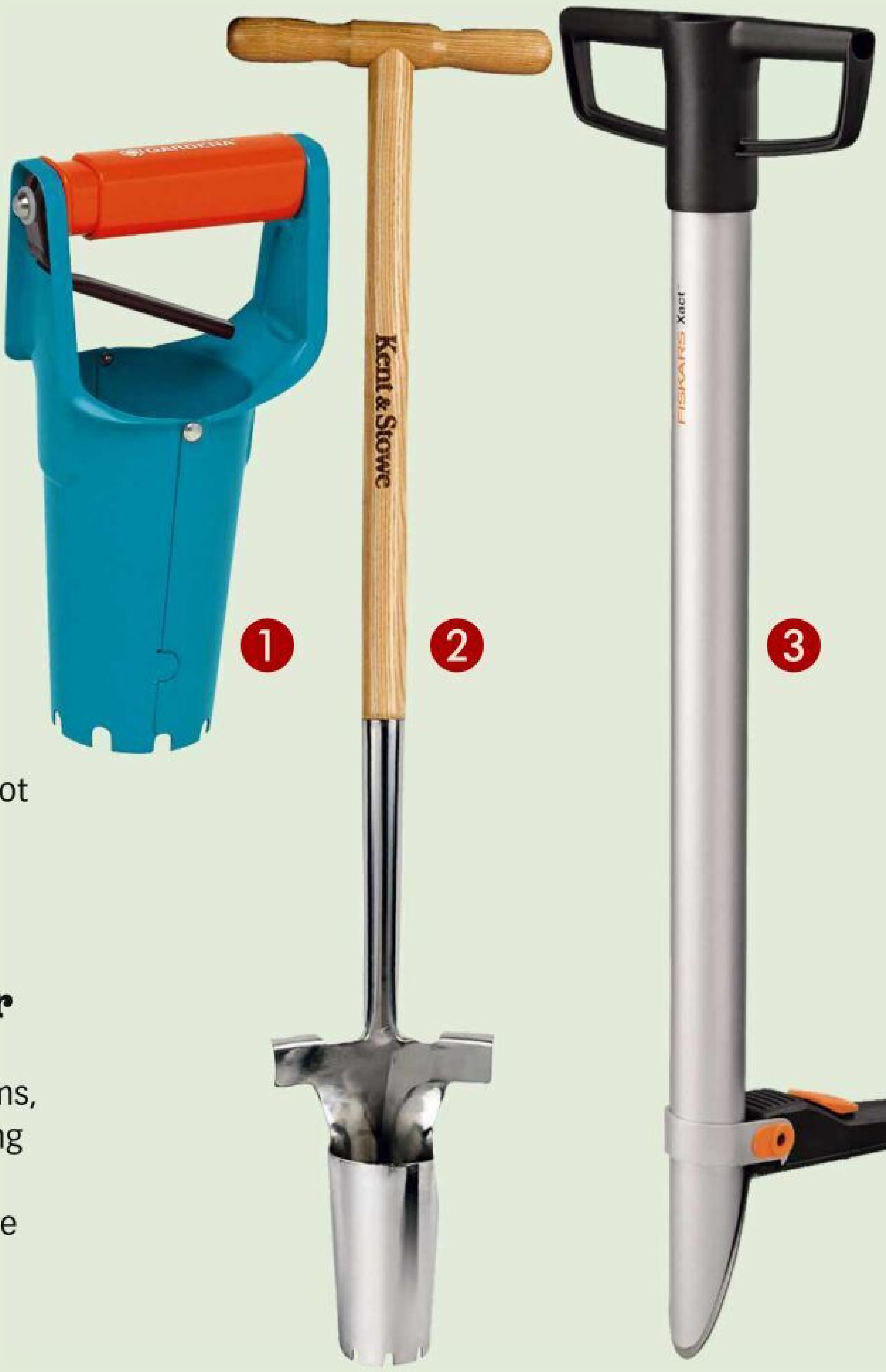
**Kent & Stowe long handled**
**£39.99**

Well made and robust, this back-friendly planter has an FSC-certified ash handle and shaft, and stainless-steel head. Its many features include a serrated base and wide foot treads to help you push down into the soil.
**marshallsgarden.com**

### 3 Best ergonomic design

**Fiskars Xact Standing Planter**
**£57.99**

Ideal for anyone with mobility or back problems, or for planting en masse, it requires no bending or kneeling – simply drop the bulbs down the tube and into the hole. It's made from rust-free aluminium and fibre composite, and can be used for any small plants, not just bulbs.
**roamwildproducts.co.uk**



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# Forks

These are mainly used for loosening soil before planting, lifting plants and dividing perennials. Forks cope better with stony soil than spades, and the tines can break up clods. Choose a larger digging fork when tackling bigger areas and breaking up soil, and a smaller, lighter border fork in tight spaces or if you have less strength.

The tines are usually made from carbon steel or stainless steel. The strongest forks are solid forged, rather than several pieces welded together.

### 1 Best for confined spaces

**Sophie Conran Digging Fork**
**£42.99**

The T-shaped handle of this small border fork makes it easy to manoeuvre among plants. The short tines are ideal for breaking up soil and its FSC-certified ash shaft and handle are light and comfy. The mirrored steel tines stop soil sticking.
**burgonandball.com**

### 2 Best for breaking up soil

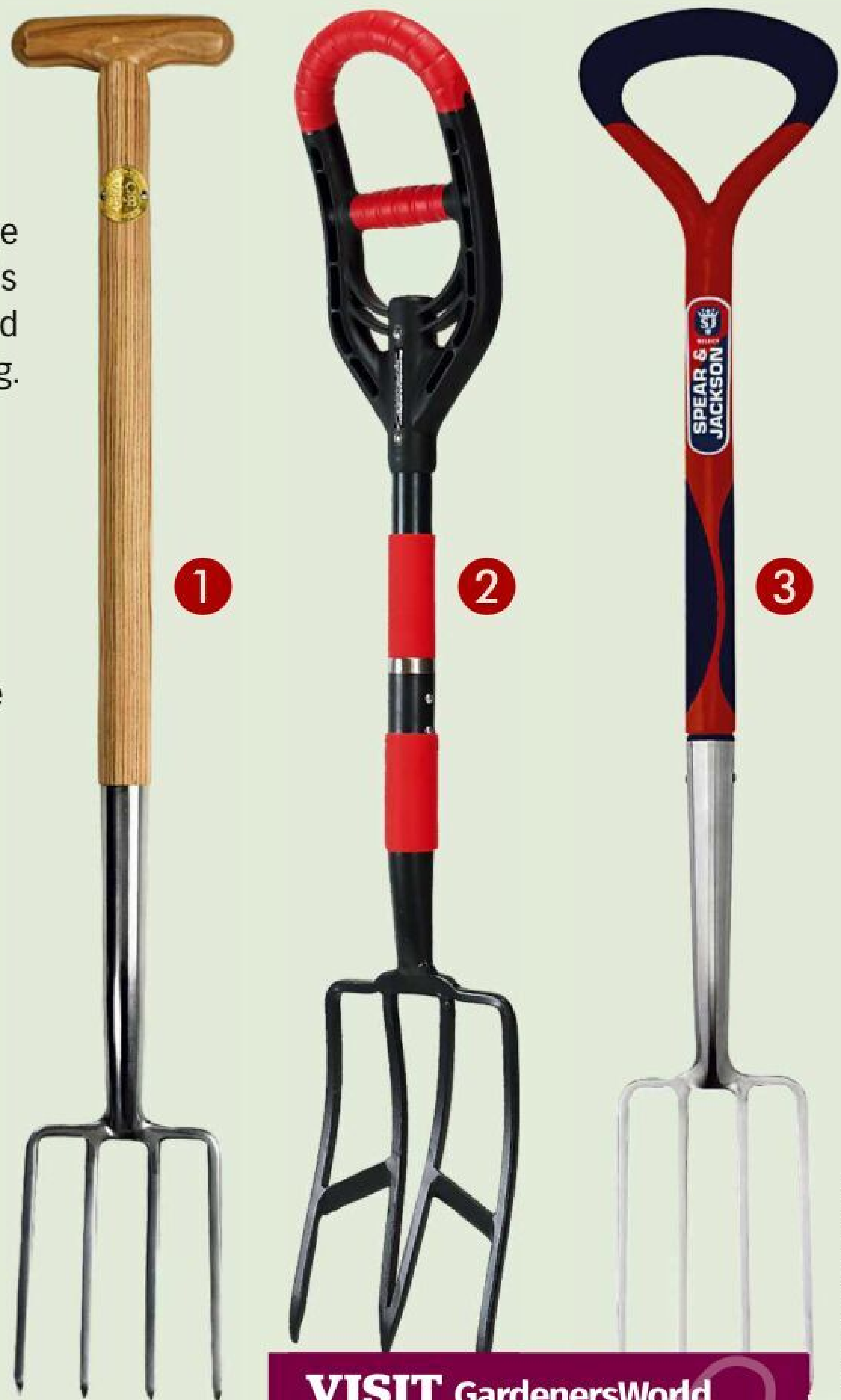
**Roamwild Multi-Digger**
**£59.99**

The innovative design includes arrow-shaped tines, soil chopping blades, a multi-grip handle and ergonomic shape. Strong and weighty, this fork is great for compacted ground, breaking down lumps and raking through soil. The angled handle makes it extra versatile.
**roamwildproducts.co.uk**

### 3 Best for ease of use

**Spear & Jackson Select stainless-steel border fork**
**£35.95**

Easy to use and gentle on the back, this fork has a polypropylene shaft and handle at an ergonomic angle. It has strong stainless-steel tines and its wide handle sits well in the hand.
**tooled-up.com**



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PHOTOS: PAUL DEBOIS; TIM SANDALL

advertisement feature

PURINA Feeding Greatness Winalot Since 1927

Sarah's daughters, Millie and Bethany, with Marmite and Peanut

Sarah

## SARAH, PEANUT AND MARMITE'S STORY

**Here's why Sarah thinks her two tiny chihuahuas, Peanut and Marmite, are Great British Dogs…**

"We got Peanut just before the first lockdown," says Sarah. "It was nice for us to have something positive to focus on, and a small companion to cuddle."

After Peanut, it wasn't long before Marmite arrived. "They do everything together. Owning chihuahuas is very different. It's like having all the perks of a dog, but in miniature. They're half the hassle but give you all the love," she laughs.

Now, Sarah and her husband Anthony always have a reason to leave the house. "Even though they're small dogs, they keep us active," she explains. "We've also met more people and now we see plenty of familiar faces on our daily walks."

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**LauraAsh – April 2022**

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# Planted to the max

Barakura-style planting from Japan has instant impact – it's like flower arranging in pots and **Michael Perry** shows you how

**PHOTOS** SARAH CUTTLE

**A few years ago, I was** invited to Barakura English Garden, Japan, to lead a series of workshops. When I arrived, I was enthralled by the pot displays, each with a carefully curated selection of plants, chosen at peak, to give an instantaneous display. There seemed to be a playful disregard for any spacing advice shown on labels. It was about the here and now. This was 'flower arranging' with plants.

The team, and their gardening school students, were selecting plants from across the garden centre – a shrub might end up with a border perennial and some basket plants. There was no such thing as a 'patio plant section'. The freedom this gave was exhilarating. We would often split plants such as thyme, or mould the rootballs to shape them around other plants, giving added flexibility to the display.

After my trip, I experimented with the style at home, and was surprised by the longevity. The jigsaw planting style meant that plants could be swapped as they faded or became too boisterous and planted elsewhere, so no plant would go to waste.

*Michael Perry is a TV presenter and horticultural influencer who has travelled widely to bring new ideas to his social media followers* ***@mr_plantgeek***

## The cottage container

With the Barakura style, your choice of container is just as important as the plants. This outdoor wicker-basket pot gives a distinct cottage-garden vibe, which I have complemented with wafty achillea, the silver sheen from the gorgeous grass and a skirt of heuchera.

I love the container's height, which brings everything together like a miniaturised cottage garden – who says you can't have a cottage garden on a small balcony? This is an extremely versatile pot that suits sun or dappled shade, with plenty of plants that can find homes in the garden afterwards.

### We used

① ***Achillea*** **'Strawberry Seduction'**
② ***Cortaderia selloana*** **'Splendid Star'**
③ ***Heucherella*** **'Sweet Tea'**
④ ***Coprosma*** **'Pacific Night'**
⑤ ***Cordyline*** **'Can Can'**
⑥ **Pink Astilbe**
⑦ **Rattan basket, height x diameter 30cm x 37cm, £35,** ***thebasketcompany.com***

4
1
6
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7

## Doorstep garden

I was excited to find this globe-shaped pot, with its knitted effect and lovely pale-blue tone. I have paired the silver of the calocephalus and senecio with the fresh green of the aspidistra, which is often regarded as a house plant. Cyclamen, parahebe and a hardy geranium – selected for its foliage – finish off this instant look.

This is a versatile pot and its compact size is ideal for a sheltered doorstep away from frost. Built for autumn, it has a fresh and different colour palette.

### We used

① ***Parahebe catarractae* 'Porlock'**
② ***Aspidistra elatior***
③ ***Gentiana* 'Blue Heart'**
④ ***Calocephalus brownii***
⑤ ***Senecio* 'Angel Wings'**
⑥ ***Cyclamen* Miracle Series**
⑦ ***Geranium pratense***
⑧ **Pastel-blue container, H x D 18cm x 28cm, £20.70, *greenseedsmarket.com***

## Bug hunter box

Experimenting with insect-eating plants is always fun and they'll enjoy a sunny patio in the warmer months, too. If you're using plants that each need slightly different soils, keep the plants in their original pots and sink them into the group container. This way you can try different positions until you get the display you like.

This concrete container is topped with moss that will help keep everything moist, which the plants will need. This is a great indoor-outdoor Barakura pot, with pitcher plants and Venus flytraps, that you can bring indoors once cooler weather arrives.

### We used

- ❶ ***Dionaea muscipula*** **(Venus flytrap)**
- ❷ ***Sarracenia*** **'Bella'**
- ❸ ***Sarracenia*** **'Purple Haze'**
- ❹ **Sustainable sphagnum moss**
- ❺ **Faux-concrete pot, H x W x D 40.5cm x 40cm x 40cm, £42.99, *amazon.com***

### Choosing the right soil

When planting carnivorous plants such as Venus flytrap and sarracenia more permanently, you'll need a different soil to the standard patio mix. You can find specialist mixes in the local garden centre or search online for a peat-free alternative.

It needs to be a low-nutrient, slightly acidic medium, similar to what the plants grow in in their natural habitat. Your plants will be happiest in a bright position and must be kept moist at all times, so top the planters with moss to help keep everything nice and damp.

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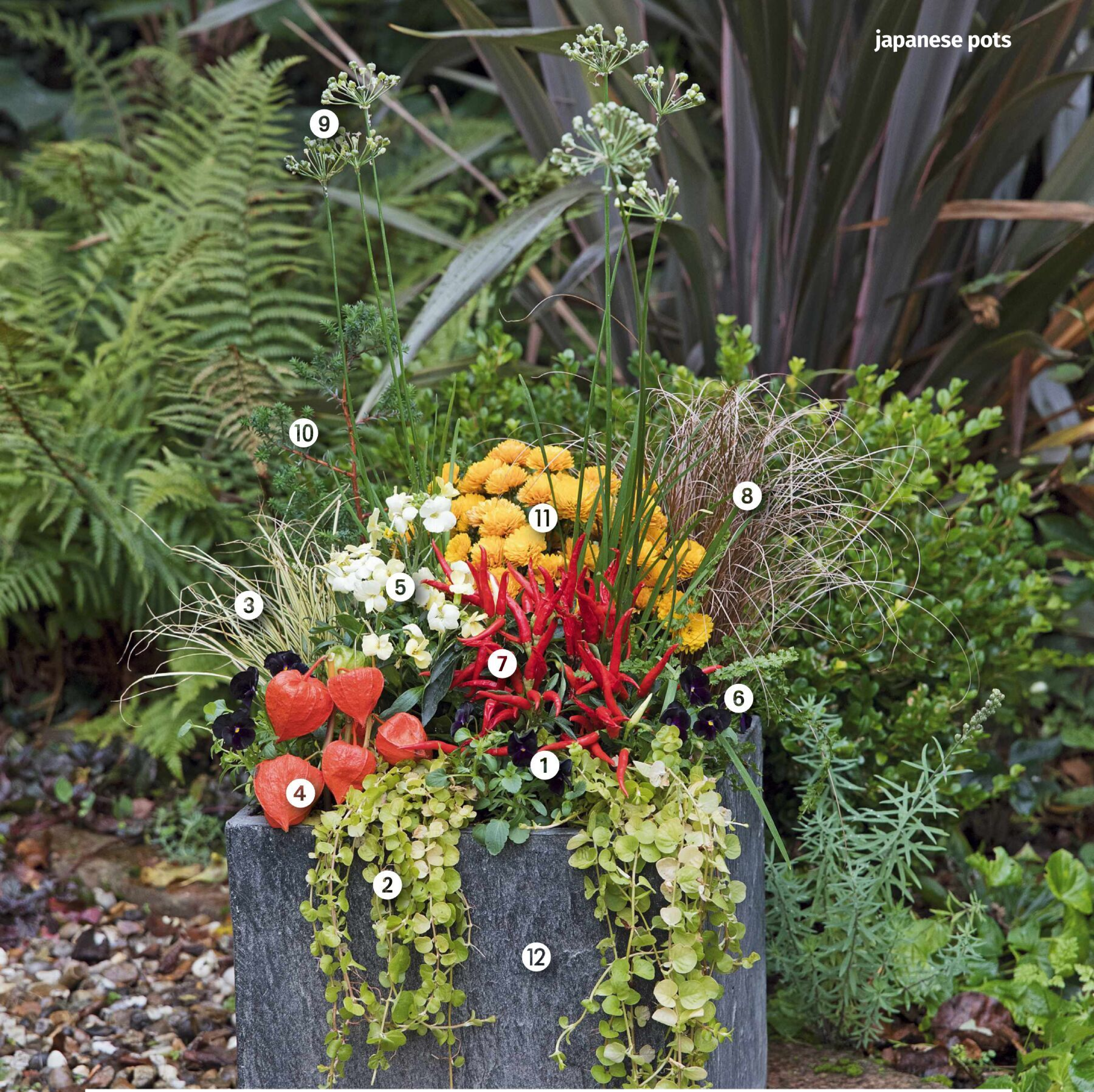


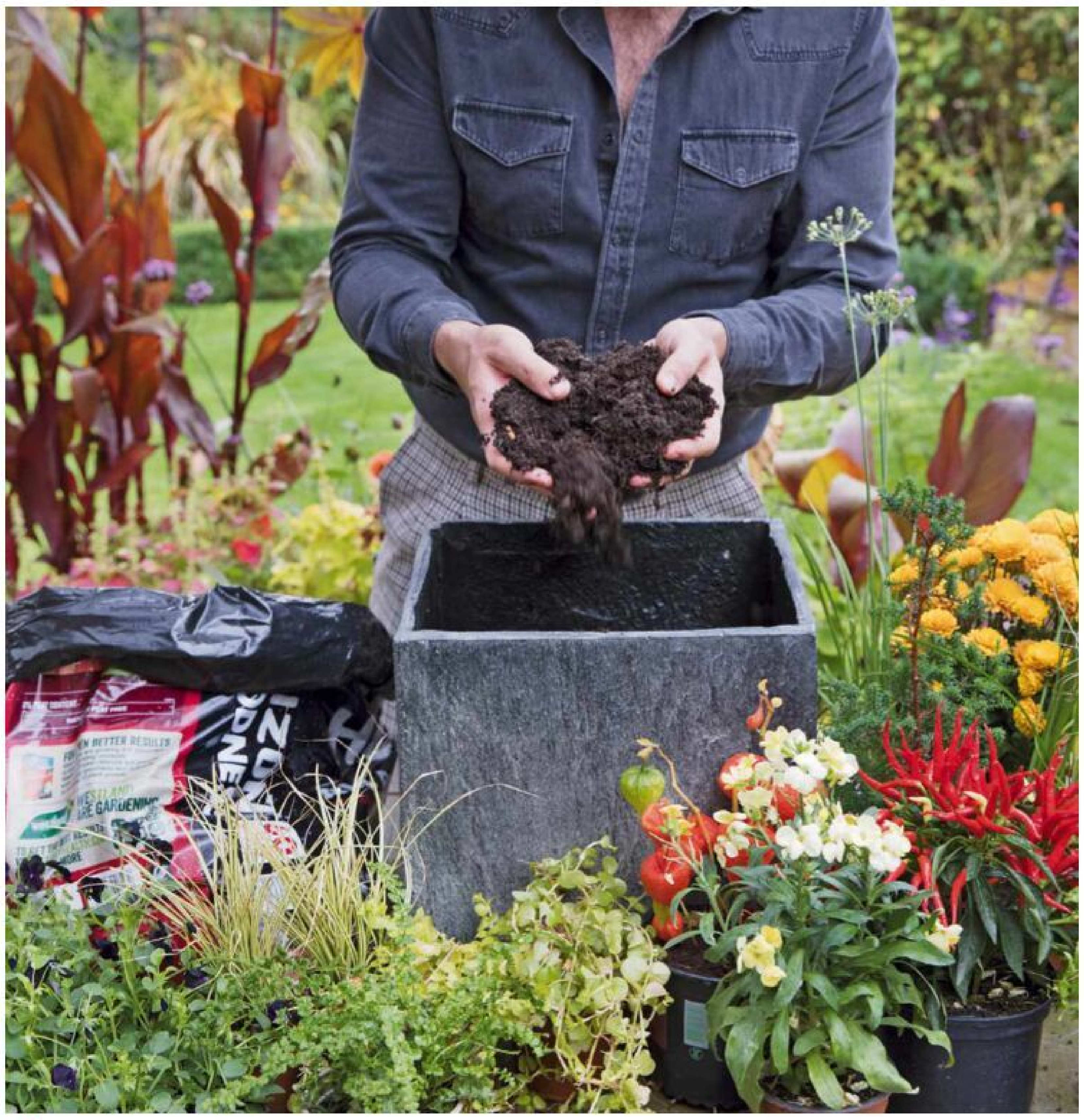
## Autumn on fire

When travelling in the USA and Canada, I always admire the autumn decorations, and strive to incorporate this in my own garden. This display brings together the typical autumn colour palette, set against contrasting grey slate. It's defined by the 'thriller, filler, spiller' concept, with alliums in seed towering above fiery chillies and chrysanthemums, and lysimachia tumbling down. The black violas add a Halloween accent.

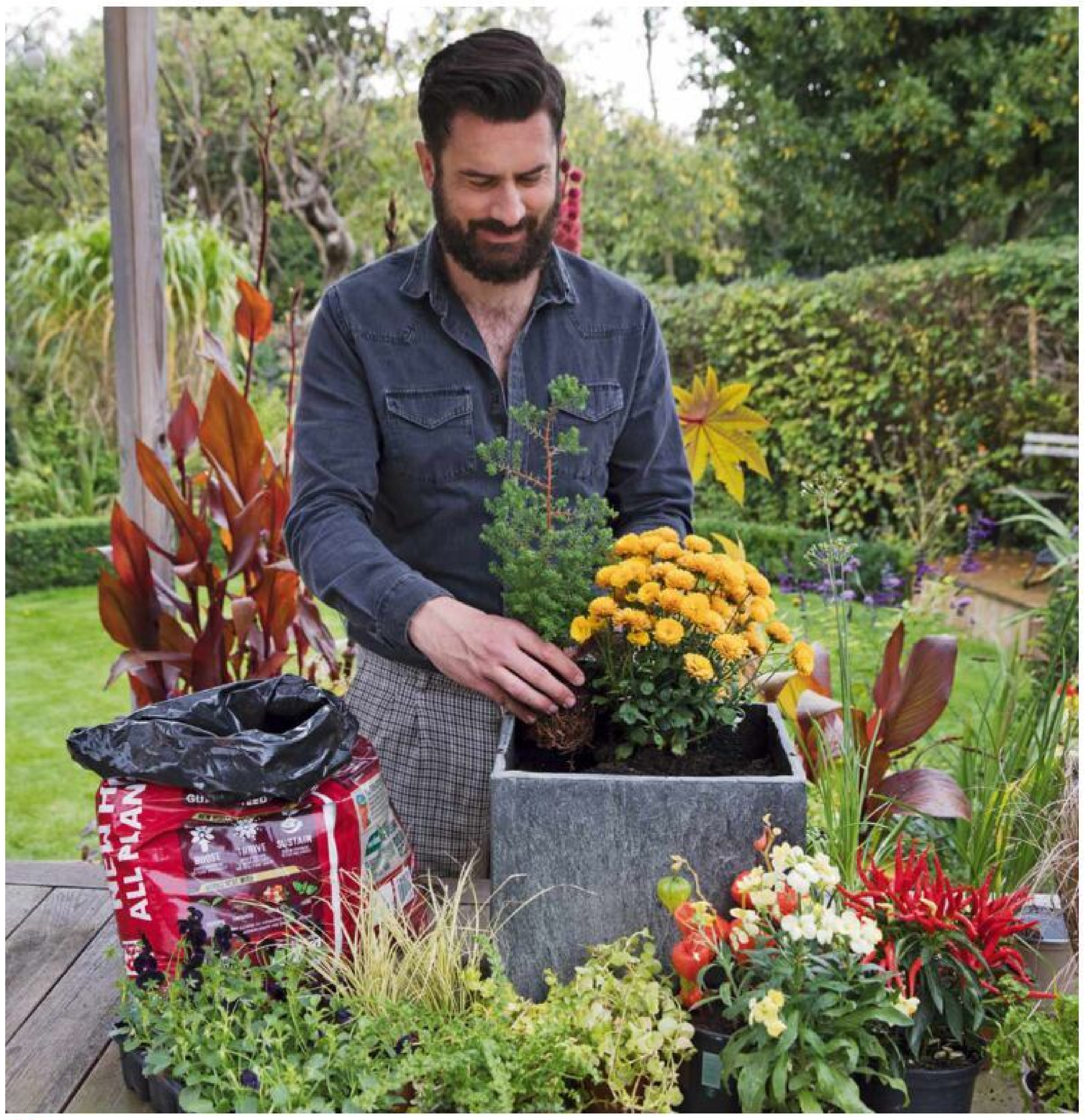
### We used

① ***Viola* 'Black Delight'**
② ***Lysimachia* 'Goldilocks'**
③ ***Carex oshimensis* 'Evergold'**
④ ***Physalis alkekengi* (Chinese lantern)**
⑤ ***Erysimum* 'Sugar Rush Primrose'**
⑥ ***Athyrium filix-femina* 'Frizelliae'**
⑦ **Chilli 'Medusa'**
⑧ ***Carex comans* bronze-leaved**
⑨ ***Allium tuberosum* (garlic chives)**
⑩ ***Chamaecyparis thyoides* 'Rubicon'**
⑪ ***Chrysanthemum* 'Branbeach Orange'**
⑫ **Slate-grey cube, H x W x D 23cm x 23cm x 23cm, approx. £35, from garden centres**

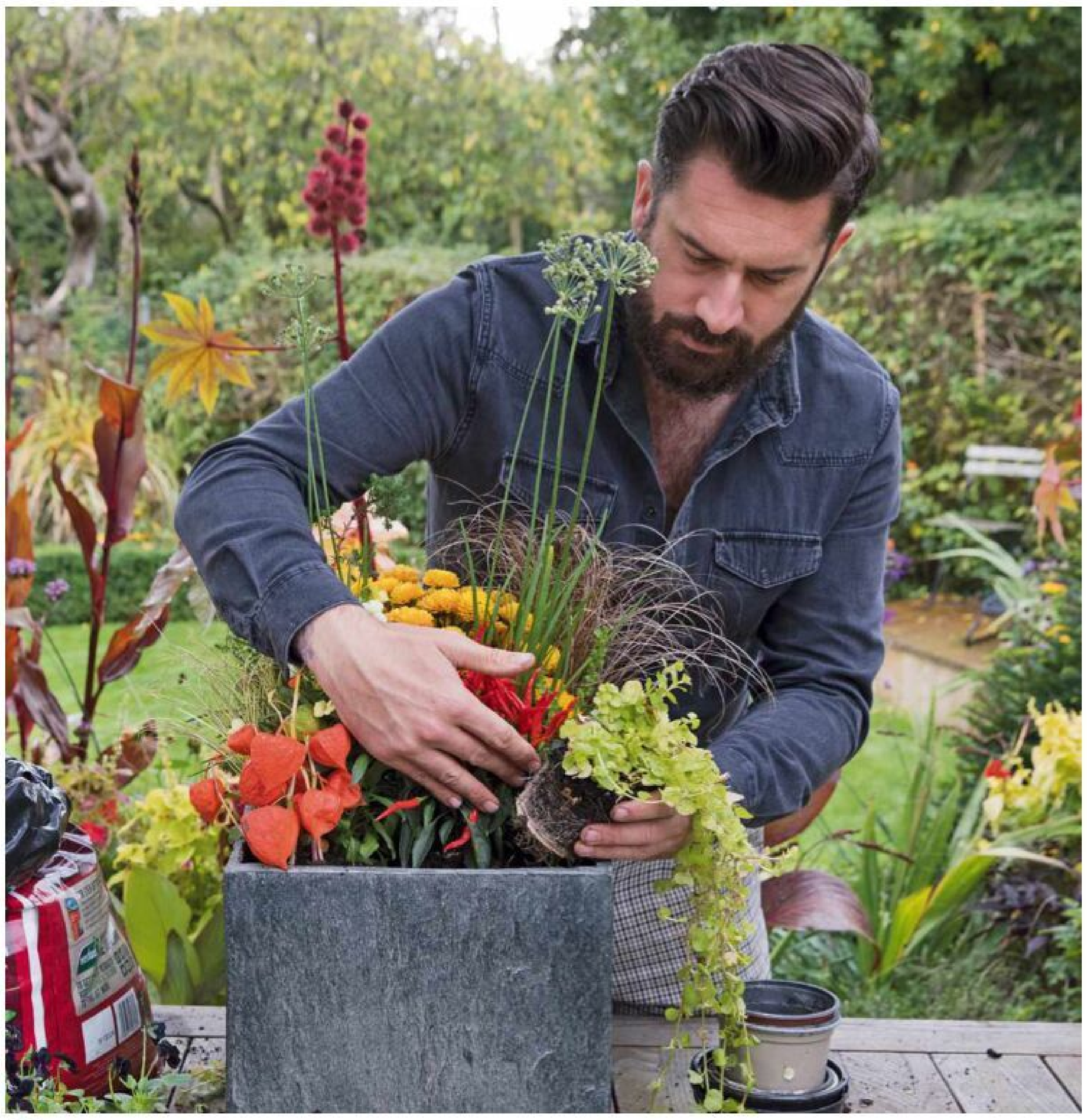
# How to plant up your Barakura-style instant display



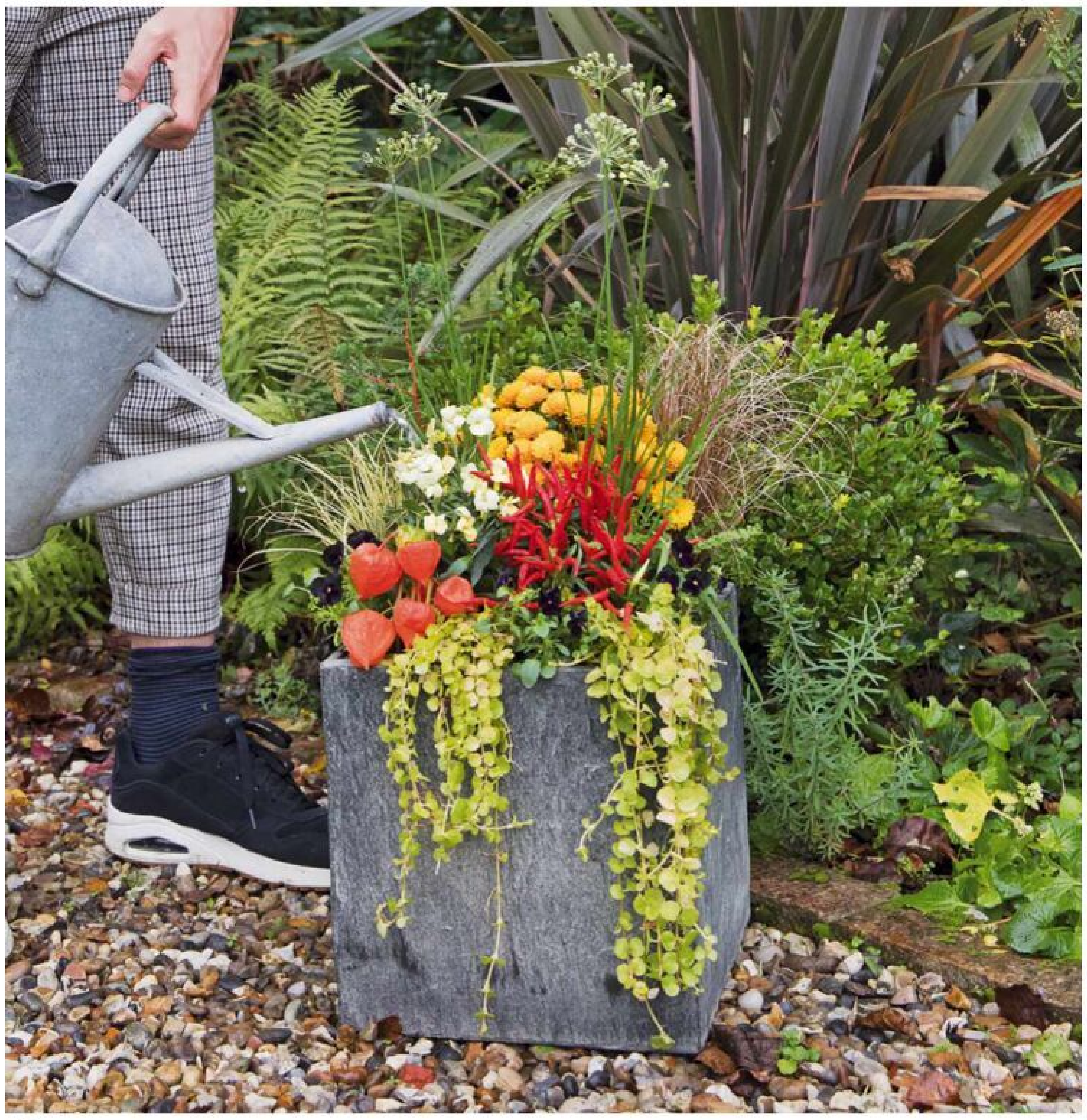
1 When creating a Barakura-style display, the container might need more attention than usual. Start by filling your pot with compost. Incorporate controlled-release fertiliser and/or moisture-retentive crystals when mixing up the potting mix so you'll be able to support your plants and container better.



2 Start by adding your tallest plants at the back and centre, then fill the rest of the space with smaller ones and anything trailing around the edge. If you're a little nervous about planting densely, you could approach this in a more organised manner and have the centre with long-term shrubs and replant the outer ring with annuals each year.



3 The larger the container you choose, the easier it will be to maintain your display. It will also provide more space for the roots to develop and the increased volume of compost it can hold will better retain any moisture.



4 Because of this pot's dense planting, regular watering is a must. Do not rely on just rainfall to water your pots – use a watering can without a rose to make sure you get water beneath the dense canopy of plants and ensure it reaches the roots.

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You can pick up lots of new skills by volunteering, and may even find yourself starting on a new career

> “The benefits for both volunteers and gardens go way beyond keeping borders free of weeds”

# How to be a garden hero

Volunteering at a garden can be an opportunity to learn, socialise and give back to your community, as *GW* team member **Lily Middleton** discovers

Whether strolling through a grand estate or a community garden, you'll often spot volunteers hard at work. But why do they do it? And how can you get involved? I've recently joined this army of enthusiastic gardeners and spend my Sundays volunteering at Fulham Palace House & Garden. I just have a small balcony, so couldn't resist the opportunity to get some soil under my fingernails and mud on my knees, plus build on my horticultural knowledge. For many gardens, volunteers are crucial for general upkeep, but the benefits for both volunteers and gardens go way beyond keeping borders free of weeds.

PHOTO: GETTY/GRAHAM OLIVER

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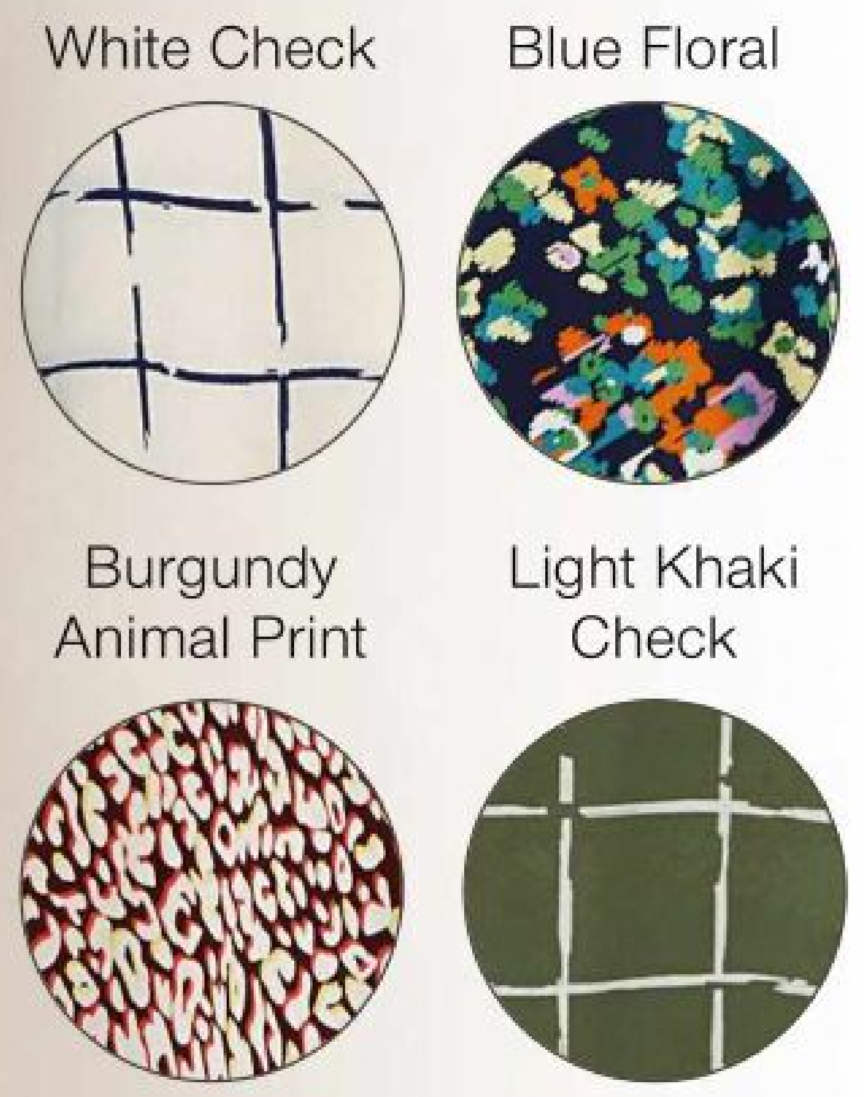

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From gardening clubs and horticultural societies to national parks and botanic gardens, many places rely on volunteers. During the pandemic, gardens' reliance on volunteers became particularly noticeable when volunteering stopped for months at a time. Rob Ternent, head gardener at Alnwick Garden, says they wouldn't have been able to re-open the garden in March 2021 if it weren't for the hard work and enthusiasm of returning volunteers. "The impact they have on general garden maintenance is astounding," he explains.

But it's not just the gardens that benefit, it's the volunteers too. Lucy Hart, head gardener at Fulham Palace, is keen that volunteers enjoy and learn as they work. Jobs are rotated (you're not endlessly weeding) and every task is given horticultural context, to help build knowledge. Tash Johnson, senior gardener at the National Trust's Gunby Estate, Hall and Gardens, started off as a volunteer herself. She was keen to learn more about pruning fruit trees from a volunteer who was a founder member of the Northern Fruit Group, and she has since learnt a lot from the volunteers, "It's a two-way process," she says.

But why should you give up your time? Well, for many volunteering offers the chance to meet new people. The relationships you form working together can become lasting friendships. Colin Hewitt was a Head Gardener before he retired and now volunteers at RHS Garden Bridgewater, he believes that the biggest benefit of volunteering is "meeting new people and making new friends".

For many people, volunteering can have a huge positive impact on their lives. After ending his 37-year career and closing his business due to ill health, Mark Linley suffered from long-term depression and anxiety. Then he spotted that the horticultural charity Thrive was looking for volunteers in Birmingham and soon he was helping with gardening tasks. He's now completed his City & Guilds Horticultural

**TOP: Many gardens, such as Great Dixter in Sussex, have a team of dedicated volunteers**
**RIGHT: Joining in at a community garden is a rewarding, practical and sociable experience**

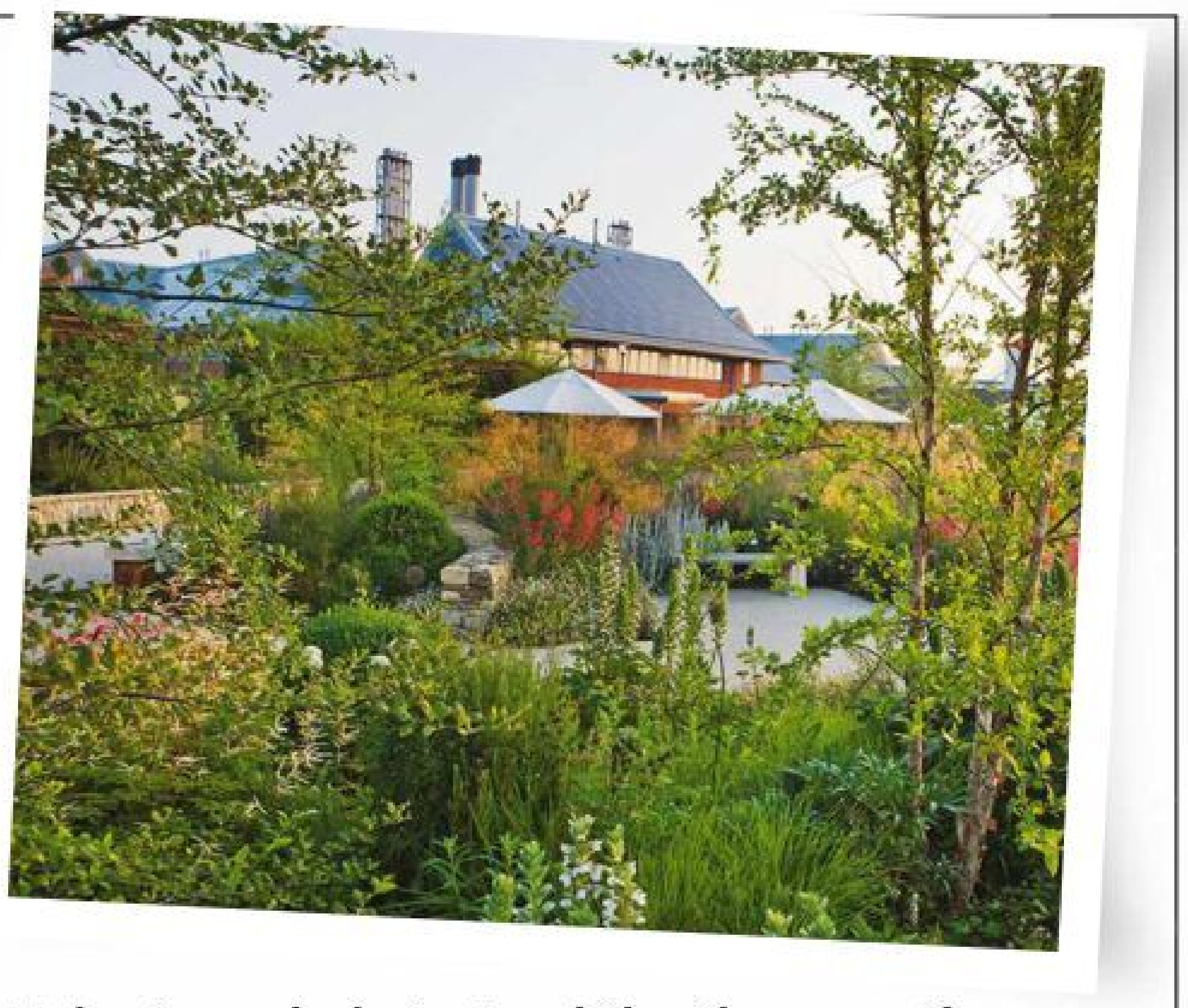
PHOTOS: ALAMY/CAROLYN CLARKE; GETTY/YELLOW DOG PRODUCTIONS; CLIVE NICHOLS

## Other volunteering ideas

It's not just gardens and estates that need help, hospitals, hospices and care homes around the country also welcome volunteers to help maintain their outdoor spaces. Roles vary from upkeeping communal planting areas, such as at Kingston Hospital in Surrey, to working in a specific green space, such as at Webb's Garden, a two-acre walled garden at St Martin's Hospital in Kent.

Horatio's Garden (horatiosgarden.org.uk) is a national charity that creates gardens in NHS spinal injury centres across the UK. These are all maintained by volunteers, who not only care for the garden, but also support therapeutic activities.

If you're looking for something further afield, there are volunteer gardening roles around the world. Companies such as Working Abroad (workingabroad.com) and GVI (gvi.co.uk) can help you find a location and role that suits you. The opportunities vary hugely, from botany and gardening in the Maldives to helping protect the Amazon cloud forest in Peru.



**Volunteers help to tend the therapeutic Horatio's Garden at Salisbury District Hospital**

Diploma as well as Thrive's own horticultural courses. He finds that volunteering "creates a real sense of purpose and satisfaction" and is incredibly proud to be a volunteer.

Most gardens will encourage and support you to take part, whatever your individual capabilities. Liz Hughes, a volunteer at Hillsborough Castle and Gardens in Northern Ireland, had to retire from her career as a primary school teacher due to a serious ankle injury. But, she says, "my mobility issues haven't prevented me from taking a full part in the work to be done." Alnwick Garden prides itself on being fully accessible and is keen to help anyone who's interested to get involved.

The RHS will discuss options with whoever would like to work in one of its gardens and makes sure its practical gardening opportunities are as accessible as possible for people with disabilities. It's also developing more flexible volunteering opportunities, such as short-term, weekend or home-based options, to make its scheme open to as many as possible.

You can't deny the impact and benefits of volunteering for both the organisations and the individuals. In a recent survey of RHS volunteers, 62 per cent agreed that volunteering has helped them to develop new skills. And while some people are looking for a career change, many just want to enjoy time outside, like Gunby Hall volunteer Mike Jeffreson, who sums it up: "I love working and being outdoors, being involved with the natural world and the changing seasons."

**RIGHT:** Volunteers of all ages and abilities contribute to Alnwick Garden's success

## Get involved

**When deciding where to volunteer, it's best to choose a location relatively local to you, perhaps where you already enjoy spending time. It sounds obvious, but it needs to be somewhere that you want to be – I fell in love with Fulham Palace during the lockdowns, so it's a joy to be there every Sunday.**

### Cadw

Several heritage properties across Wales offer various roles for volunteers. See details at: **bit.ly/cadw-volunteer**

### English Heritage

Looking after a rich diversity of historic sites across England, this charity provides lots of rewarding volunteering opportunities: **english-heritage.org.uk/volunteer**

### National Trust

You'll find volunteer roles in many of its gardens: **nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteer**

### National Trust for Scotland

Caring for gardens, properties and landscapes across Scotland, the NTS welcomes keen volunteers: **bit.ly/nts_volunteer**

### Royal Horticultural Society

The RHS offers volunteering roles both in its gardens and at its flower shows, as well as in community gardening projects in schools and neighbourhood groups. See details at: **rhs.org.uk/volunteer**

### Thrive

With gardens in London, Birmingham and Reading, this horticultural charity helps bring about positive changes in the lives of people with disabilities or who are disadvantaged or vulnerable. Go to: **thrive.org.uk/volunteer**

### Your favourite local spot

Get in touch with your favourite local garden, nature reserve or green space to see if they're looking for volunteers!

**Helping visitors – from Kenilworth Castle…**

**…to Osterley Park – can be fun and fulfilling**

PHOTOS: GETTY/MARGARET WHITTAKER/DESIGN PICS; RICHARD EARP/HISTORIC ENGLAND/ENGLISH HERITAGE TRUST; NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/ROB STOTHARD

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Growing
Greener

# Plastics: let's kick the habit

Plastic is everywhere in our gardens – it can be hard to avoid and is often impossible to recycle. But **Sally Nex** is here to help, with tips on how we can reduce our reliance on this problematic material

**ILLUSTRATIONS** ELIN BROKENSHAW

**Sally Nex** is an eco-conscious professional gardener and writer. Her book *How to Garden the Low Carbon Way* helps you bring your garden in tune with nature and the environment

**Next time you're in your garden**, count how many things around you are made of plastic. British gardeners get through about 500 million plastic pots every year. You've probably got your own stash, and a fine collection of compost sacks, not to mention plant labels and fertiliser bottles…

It's not hard to see why we've become dependent on plastic – it's cheap, lightweight and waterproof. There's the obvious plastic – pots, labels, watering cans – but also hidden plastic, like blister packs with mail-order plug plants, or the green coating on garden wire. Some doesn't even look like plastic: horticultural fleece is woven polypropylene and whenever it tears, shreds of plastic scatter into your soil. And we're only beginning to uncover the effects plastics are having in our soil. These may come from damaged pots, torn polythene cloches and many other sources. Research has shown that earthworms living among microplastics lose weight[*], and that plastic pollution causes a decline in the myriad underground creatures that keep our soil healthy. As plastics degrade, they can also release pollutants like phthalates (found in older garden hoses) and bisphenol A (from polycarbonate greenhouses), both harmful to human health.

> “Whenever horticultural fleece tears, shreds of plastic scatter into your soil”

Looking after your plastic helps, and recycling it keeps it out of landfill longer, too. We recycle only a fraction of our garden plastic, partly because it's difficult: most council waste schemes don't accept plant pots. But more garden centres now offer pot recycling and the UK's largest

### Greener facts

- When plastics end up in landfill, they aren't harmless. They degrade into tiny toxic particles that contaminate soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals accidentally eat them chain, Dobbies, also recycles compost sacks. Some garden centres, such as Edibleculture in Kent, put plants into cardboard sleeves at checkout so you leave the plastic pot behind, as visitors to BBC Gardeners' World Live were able to experience this year.

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[*] EFFECTS OF MICROPLASTICS IN SOIL ECOSYSTEMS: ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND, ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

[†] MICROPLASTICS AS AN EMERGING THREAT TO TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, IGB/FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

Recycling can't solve everything though. Unlike glass, plastic won't recycle indefinitely, as it degrades each time – so can only be recycled once or twice. Instead we need to use alternative options, such as fibre, bamboo or grain hulls.

Sometimes it's a simple swap: wooden seed trays are as easy to use as plastic and look nicer. Occasionally you'll need to be inventive, like using old, white cotton sheets instead of plastic mesh to protect brassicas, or do things differently, such as plant new potatoes a few weeks later so you don't need fleece to keep off frost.

And gardening without plastic has its benefits. Non-plastic items are repairable and you can often make them yourself. I find seedlings thrive in wooden trays and paper pots, which are porous so air circulates better; and they establish quicker when planted. Don't worry if the paper starts to break down before you plant – scoop up the roots in a clump and they'll be fine.

Unfortunately plastic is sometimes unavoidable: mixing your own compost isn't practical if you live in a flat, for example. But you can still make plant-pot hangers from natural hemp or swap house plant cuttings with friends to avoid buying plastic pots. Make every choice count and you too can grow a greener, plastic-free garden.

## Will it compost?

**Kim Stoddart, editor of *The Organic Way* magazine for Garden Organic, outlines how to compost 'biodegradable' items**

**The term 'biodegradable' can cause confusion when it comes to knowing what can be home-composted and what cannot. This term simply isn't a guarantee that an item can be broken down in this way, as many gardeners are finding. Common culprits include coffee cups, supermarket bags and produce wrappers, which may break down in industrial composting environments but not in the average gardener's cold-composting system.**

**To help you negotiate the sometimes confusing labelling, look out for the logo above, from the Organics Recycling Group, which indicates items are home-compostable rather than just biodegradable.**

### Greener facts

- **Research from Germany† indicates that terrestrial microplastic pollution is much worse than that at sea, estimating it to be four to 23 times higher, depending on the environment**

# WAYS TO CONSUME LESS PLASTIC

Here are some easy steps you can take to reduce the amount of new plastic coming into your garden. But don't bin the plastic you already have – use and look after it, then avoid buying more.

## Look after the plastic you've got

Every garden has a reserve of plastic built up over the years, and the best way to keep it out of landfill and avoid buying more is to look after it and keep using it. Place plastic items in the shade, as UV light makes them brittle, and store them in sheds over winter. Sitting plants in plastic trays and pots up on shelves helps to avoid accidental damage.

**TOP TIP** Recycle your plastic before it gets too old and starts breaking, to avoid shedding microplastics directly into the environment.

## Make your own bio-pots

Re-purpose newspaper and cardboard into biodegradable modules and pots – you'll be upcycling waste materials into a better start for your plants. Use a wooden paper potter or glass jar to roll newspaper strips into small cylindical pots for sowing seeds, and save cardboard loo roll inners for sowing long-rooted plants such as beans and sweet peas.

**TOP TIP** Make larger pots from thin cardboard: cut out an open-topped box template, then tape the sides together with paper masking-tape.

## Shop carefully

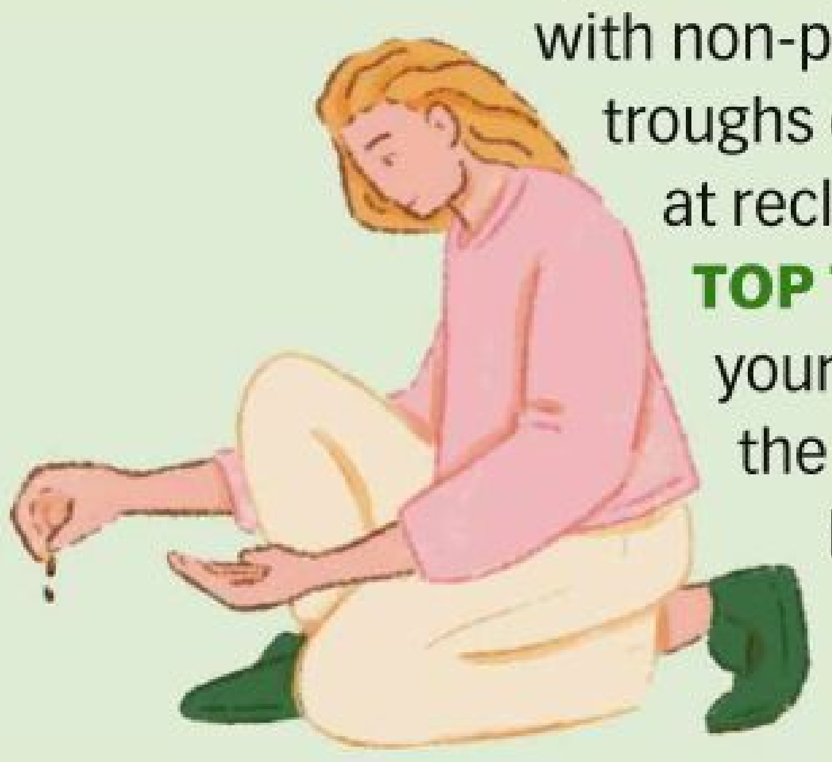
Going plastic-free is all about making conscious choices: so refuse to buy twine, eco-pots or wooden plant labels that are packaged in plastic (all are available in paper sleeves or loose online). Save up and invest in fewer, but higher-spec wooden tools, containers, furniture and other products that will last longer, then look after them well.

**TOP TIP** Buying second-hand often means you get better quality at a cheaper price, and with a lower carbon footprint, too.

## Turn troughs into water butts

Plastic water butts last for years, even decades. But if they do eventually break, replace them with non-plastic second-hand cattle troughs or old water tanks bought at reclamation yards or auctions.

**TOP TIP** Make a wooden lid for your trough (leaving a hole for the downpipe) and fit a water butt tap to the pipe inlet hole. Then you can fill your can from the tap or just dip it in.



## Mix your own potting compost

Blend homemade compost, soil and leafmould to make potting compost without the plastic sack. It's quick to make, peat-free and low-carbon. You can make as little as a bucketful if you're just potting up a few house plants, and you can tweak the ingredients to suit the plants.

**TOP TIP** A mix of three parts garden compost, two parts weed-free soil and one part coir, leafmould or well-rotted woodchip, plus a trowelful of seaweed meal per barrow, makes a good all-round multi-purpose potting compost.

## Buy bare-root plants

New plants invariably arrive with an unwanted side order of plastic. But bare-root plants, available from September to March, usually come just as they are, dug up while dormant to plant in winter, when they'll settle in better. A massive range of plants are now sold bare-root, including perennials such as irises, peonies and phlox, as well as shrubs and trees.

**TOP TIP** Unpack bare-root plants as soon as they arrive. Soak tree and shrub roots in water for an hour, before planting as soon as possible.

## Greener facts

- It takes 1,000 years for a plastic bag to degrade, breaking down into microplastic particles
- Standard water treatment facilities cannot remove all traces of microplastics

### Use your garden's resources

There's often no need to go shopping at all. You can make liquid plant feed from comfrey or nettle leaves, and plant labels from painted stones or broken roof slates. You'll minimise your demand on the Earth's resources, making your gardening not just zero-plastic but almost zero-carbon, too.

**TOP TIP** Grow your own string plant, aka New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*) – its leaves can be split lengthways to make strong fibres that can be used for tying in tomatoes.

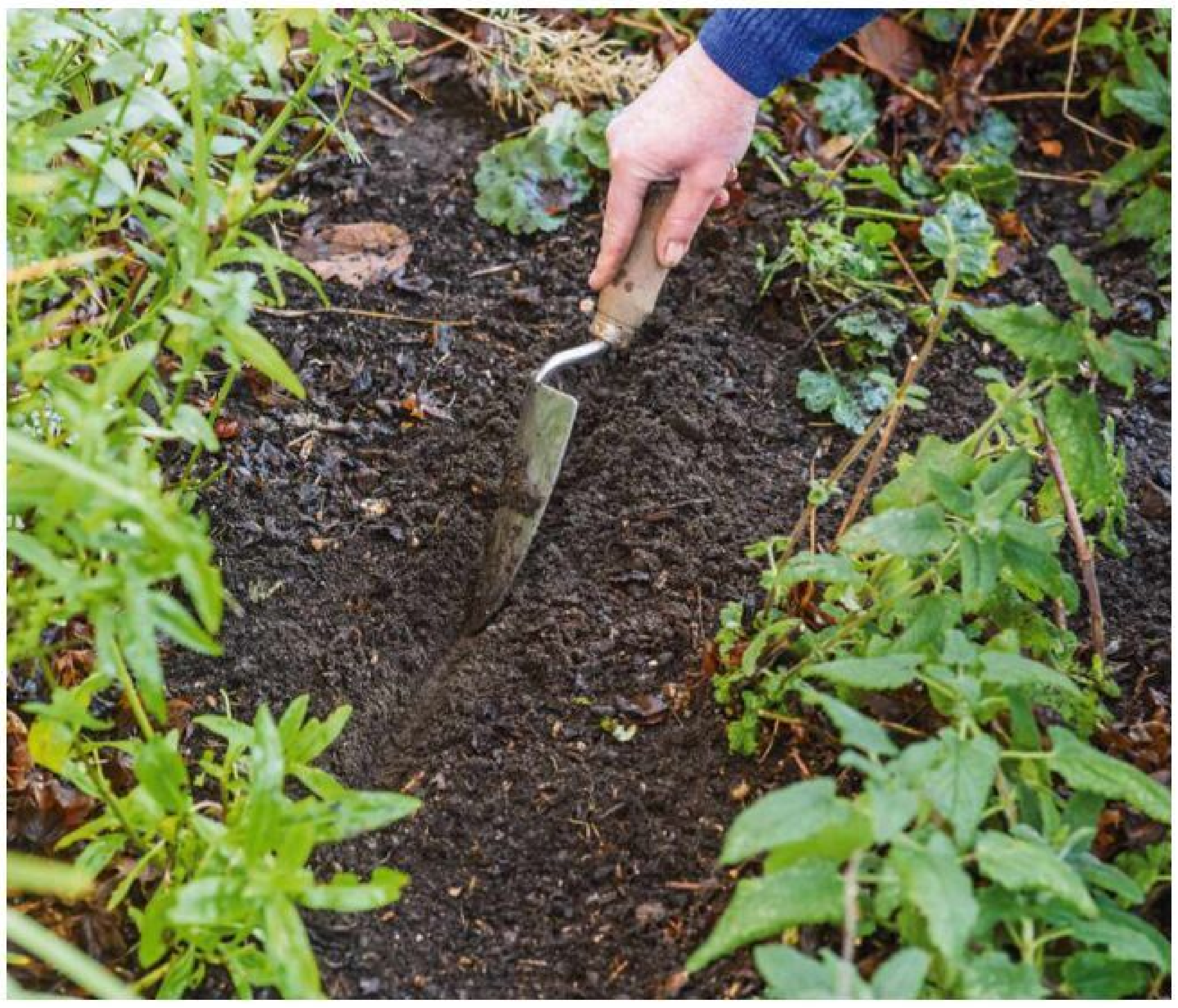
### Grow your own vegetables

Your garden can help you cut your plastic-use in the kitchen, too. Grow your own veg without chemicals and your food will be plastic-free, organic, low-carbon, fresh and utterly delicious.

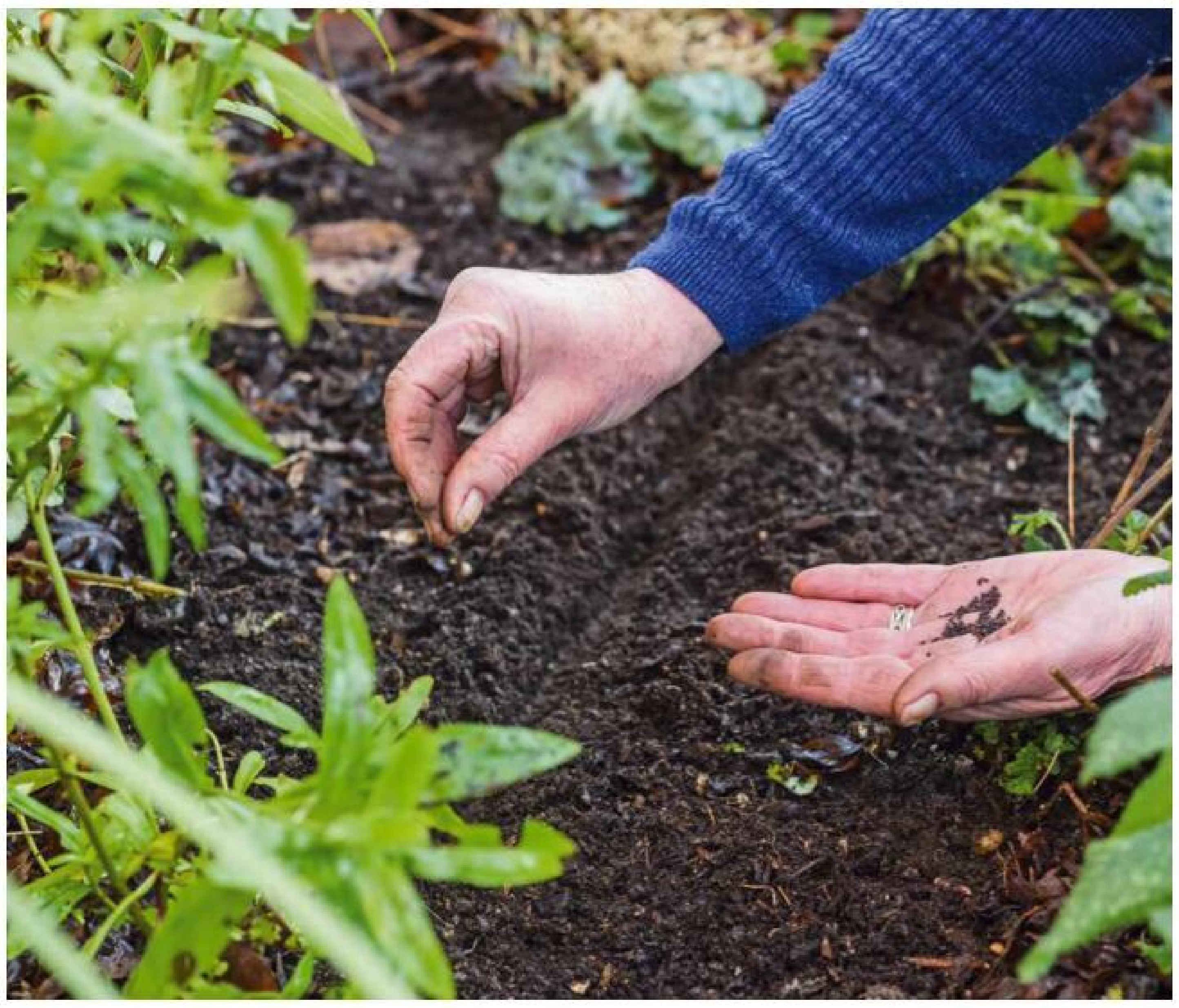
**TOP TIP** Cross off high-plastic veg from your shopping list first, like salad leaves, cucumbers and French beans. These will grow happily in a pot or a patch of sunny ground.

# Sowing flowers direct

**If you have a spare patch of ground, you can start sowing flowers for next year now. Sowing direct – or straight into the soil – rather than into pots or seed trays, reduces the amount of plastic you use and means you don't have to spend time transplanting them outdoors later. Hardy annuals, such as cornflowers and California poppies, are ideal for sowing in September and will give you flowers in early summer next year, after overwintering as seedlings on your plot.**



**1** Clear any weeds that would compete with your seedlings. Make one or several shallow drills with the end of a trowel or a stick. Water along the drill if the soil is dry. It's also worth marking the end of the drills with a label to help you remember what you sowed when the seedlings grow bigger next year.



**2** Try to space the seeds evenly as you drop them along the drill. Sow slightly closer than the final spacing given on the seed packet, as some may not germinate or the seedlings may fail. Then, as the seedlings grow, thin them out gradually to their final spacing. Sowing in rows makes it easy to identify weeds.

**3** Cover the seeds with a thin layer of soil, then water well. Put a rose on the watering can to produce a gentle flow, so the seeds don't get washed out of place. If the weather is dry, continue watering every few days until autumn rains set in. Take precautions to deter slugs and snails, and weed regularly.

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; NEIL HEPWORTH; JASON INGRAM; TIM SANDALL; GETTY/SEVEN75

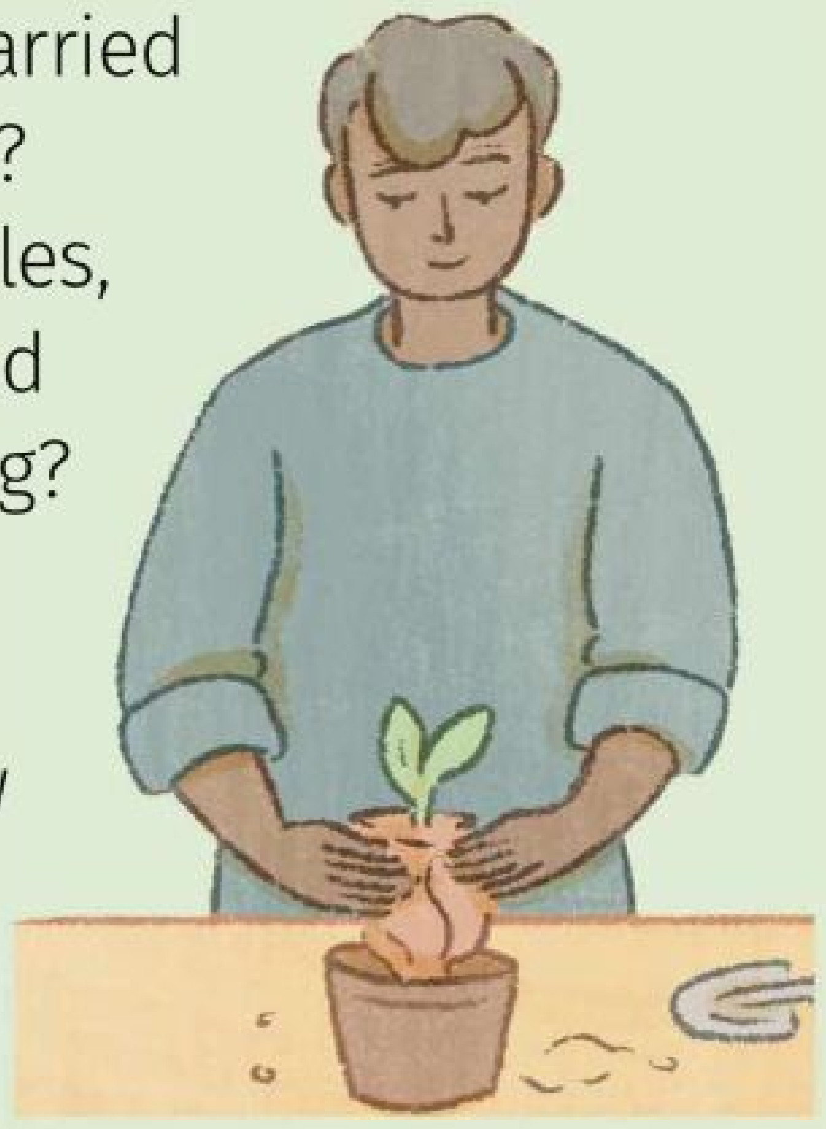
## Common plastics used in gardens

| **Name** | PVC (polyvinyl chloride) | LDPE (low-density polyethylene) | PP (polypropylene) | Polystyrene | Bioplastics |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Function** | Water pipes, wheelbarrows, tools | Potting compost bags, polytunnel coverings | Flower pots, plant trays, ropes, netting | Often re-purposed by home gardeners | Often re-purposed by home gardeners – for example as pots |
| **Considerations for buyers** | Often contains phthalates. Heat can cause chemicals to leach out | Not usually recycleable but is reusable | Not recycleable if coloured black, but is reusable | Styrene is classified as a possible human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Not recycleable | Made from renewable resources, some are compostable but they need sufficient heat and time before they rot down |

PEAT FREE
PEAT FREE
WOOL COMPOST

**You can re-purpose old compost bags into containers for tomatoes and other plants**

# DOING YOUR BIT NOW



What would you discover if you carried out a plastic audit in your garden? Compost bags, netting, tool handles, lawn mower, pots, water butts and landscaping materials like decking? We know a lot about how easy it is to buy and use plastic, but we don't know everything about how harmful it is for the planet. For example, we're unsure about the residues left behind by bioplastics, which are thought to be less harmful than plastics made from non-renewable resources. We do know that both broken pieces of plastic and the chemicals they release are harmful to life on Earth. So it's vital to think before buying, take care of the plastic items we have, and reuse or dispose of them sensibly.

**Go to: GardenersWorld.com/growing-greener**

Growing Greener
Podcast

**HEAR** about how we can make a difference, with Arit Anderson on sustainable gardening at **GardenersWorld.com/podcast** PLUS listen to Jack Wallington on greener living, while our Sowalong podcast series focuses on ways to grow more from seed.

**COMING UP in Growing Greener**

**■ OCTOBER: The recycle of life** Learn how and why we should recycle our garden waste and use homemade compost to revive our soil

**■ NOVEMBER: Digging the dirt** Find out how to look after your soil to improve biodiversity, store carbon, reduce flooding, grow healthy plants and much more. PLUS why No Dig is good for our soil

**■ DECEMBER Tree-mendous** Discover why trees are the answer to many of our planet's problems, and which ones are best to grow in our gardens

PHOTO: JASON INGRAM

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# Your wildlife month

**September is the end and the beginning** of the gardening season, all rolled into one. For us gardeners, it's time to take stock and plan for next year; for wildlife it's time to fatten up ahead of migration or hibernation, and find the perfect safe spot to see out the winter months.

Help ensure there are safe spaces for wildlife in your garden. Don't cut long grass yet – or cut in stages and leave a buffer for those species that still need it. Pile sticks and twigs at the back of borders for insects to sneak into, and leave compost heaps intact for anything from hibernating hedgehogs to frogs and bumblebees. The more wildlife that remains in your garden now, the more there will be in spring. That's something to look forward to, isn't it? **WORDS** KATE BRADBURY

## You may spot...

### Poplar hawk-moth, *Laothoe populi*

The poplar hawk-moth is magnificent, with a chunky grey, hairy body and large, scalloped, leaf-like wings. It has a wingspan of up to 10cm. When resting, it curves its abdomen upwards at the rear, and if disturbed it can flash its hindwings, which have a rusty red patch, to deter predators.

Adults are on the wing from May to July, with a second generation more common in recent years, and sightings through September. They mate and lay eggs on poplar trees, as well as aspen and willows. The caterpillars are extraordinary: bright lime green and chunky, with faint yellow diagonal markings and a telltale hawk-moth spike at the end of the tail. The larvae eat the leaves of their foodplant before coming to earth to pupate in the soil. They then either emerge again in late summer or overwinter as a pupa, to hatch out the following spring. Common throughout the UK, they are attracted to light and will come to moth traps.

**Be careful of garden spider webs**

## Also be on the lookout for...

- Ivy bees (*Colletes hederae*) emerge from hibernation in September and gorge on ivy flowers. Look for large 'mating balls' as their hormones rage.
- The garden spider (*Araneus diadematus*) is suddenly very obvious as the females build webs across shrubs and garden paths.
- Commmon newts (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) shelter beneath logs or stones ahead of hibernation. Out of water they can appear shrivelled, but this is perfectly natural.

**Poplar hawk-moths lay their eggs on poplar, aspen and willow trees**

PHOTOS: PAUL DEBOIS; GETTY/ARTERRA; NATUREPL/ROBIN CHITTENDEN

> “If disturbed the poplar hawk-moth can flash its hindwings, which have a rusty red patch, to deter predators”

**WILDLIFE PROJECT**

# Open-fronted nest box

**With much of the UK's birdlife** in decline, our gardens have an important role to play in providing places for birds to feed, shelter and breed.

As well as planting trees, shrubs and climbers to provide nest sites, adding a range of bird boxes helps attract different species.

This fun project can be easily completed in an afternoon to create an open-fronted nest box for robins. Autumn is the ideal time to put up nest boxes as it gives birds the chance to use them to roost on cold winter nights, before hopefully choosing to nest in your box next spring.

Follow the measurements diagrams below to help explain the step by steps.

## You will need

*to make an open-fronted nest box*

- ☐ **Untreated FSC timber: 110cm x 15cm x 22cm**
- ☐ **Wood saw**
- ☐ **Drill**
- ☐ **Galvanised screws** (If attaching to a tree, around the trunk or a branch, use wire inside a piece of rubber tubing, and check every couple of years to avoid damage)
- ☐ **Screwdriver**
- ☐ **Tape measure**
- ☐ **Pencil**
- ☐ **Sandpaper to sand down any rough edges**

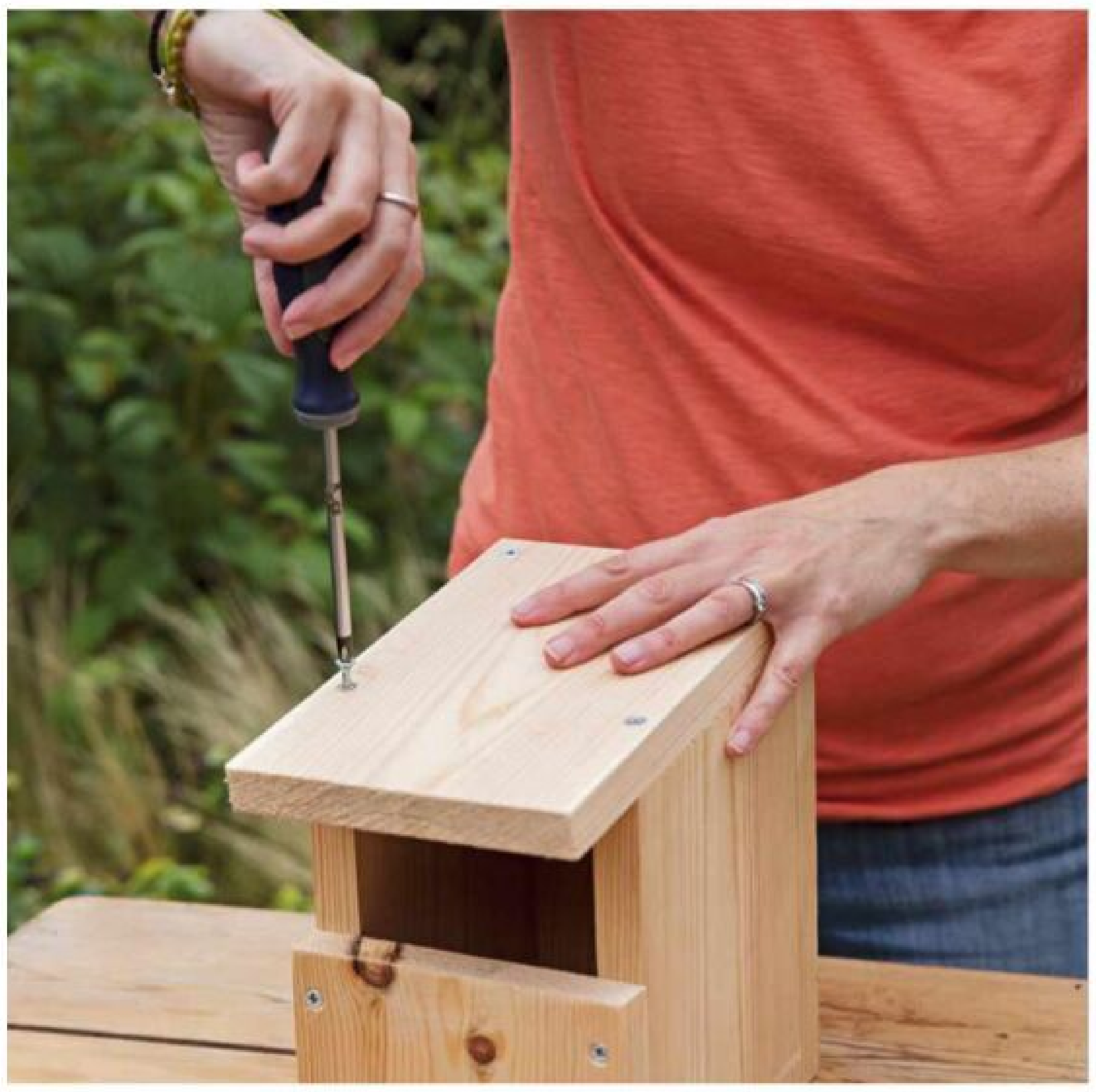
**DISCOVER** more DIY projects for wildlife at **gardeners world.com/how-to/diy/**

WORDS: NIC WILSON. PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE

1 Draw a line 20cm from the end on one edge and 17.5cm on the other edge and cut across, creating side A. Use as a template to cut side B. Draw a new line 22cm from the cut end, turn the board over and draw a line 11.6cm from the end. Join the lines across the edge to create the roof.

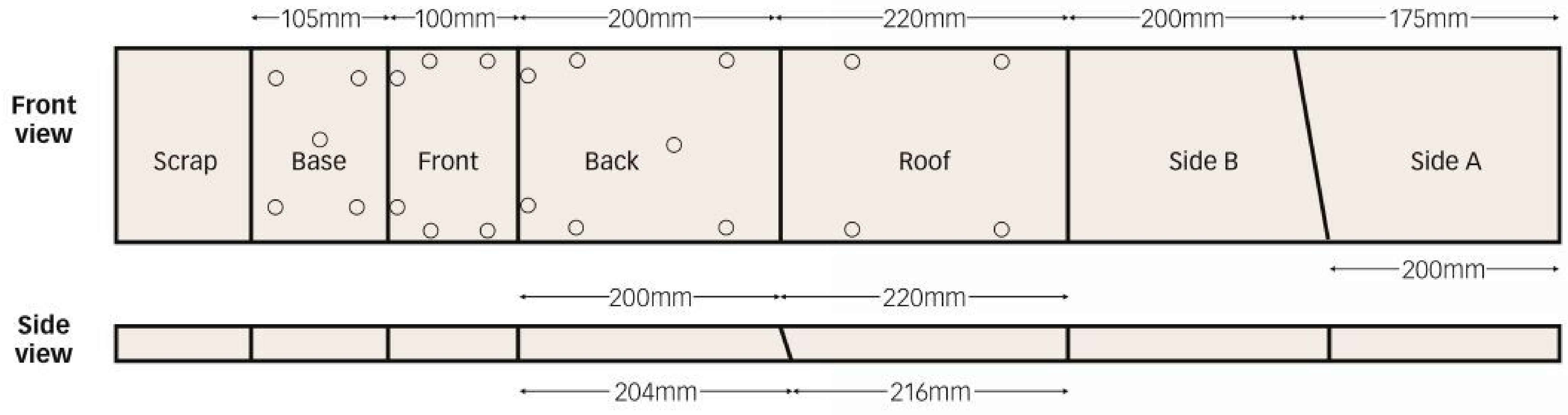
2 Measure 20.4cm from the angled cut on the longer face of the remaining board, draw a line across and saw to create the back. Now draw lines across 10cm and 20.5cm from the new cut end, and saw to create the front and base.

3 Drill six 5mm holes in each of the back and front pieces and four in the roof, following the placements in the diagram below. Drill a further 5mm hole in the back, on the centre line near the top to provide a fixing hole. Drill five 5mm holes in the base for drainage.



4 Screw the back onto side A. Repeat with side B and the base. With the cut angle aligned with the back of the box, position the roof in place and fix the six screws. Screw the front piece in place. The box can now be fixed to a post or a tree, in a sheltered spot near foliage.

## Measurements



Position your nest box no higher than 2m off the ground, facing north-east, well hidden by foliage to protect eggs and chicks from predators

# **Fresh** from the plot

As summer ends, the light is dipping and its harvests reach a glorious finale. The perfect time, then, for **Rekha** to gather in this month's rich bounty of squashes, beans and chillies

**Leave a long stem on squashes when harvesting – they can be tidied up later**

September has arrived, bringing with it a slight chill in the air each morning. Summer sunshine is behind us and, while there's still plenty of fair weather, warmth isn't guaranteed. One thing this month does provide is beaming low light over the western horizon as the day ends.

As the plot quietens down, it gives me a real sense of achievement. I can't resist checking on the produce stacked in the shed and lined up in jars filling my kitchen cupboards. The freezer is packed, too.. I am very grateful to the summer season gone by.

My eyes dart to the drying pods of French beans and the winter squashes sitting proudly raised off the ground on slates. Squash will be the last of the outdoor summer produce to be harvested. Saying that, the greenhouse is in no mood to slow down. Weekly feeds are boosting the chilli and pepper plants, helping them to stay productive. If the plants are happy, then so am I!

If there's one thing I've learnt, it's that growing my own fruit and vegetables makes me appreciate even the smallest handful of bounty. Above all, only growing what my family and I like to eat is truly satisfying.

Okay, September, you win. I'll get harvesting those rattly dried bean pods before you begin to usher in the rain clouds.

## **How I grow** French beans

Dried French beans are my top choice for harvesting and drying as a homegrown store-cupboard staple. Their life begins in mid-April as the sun starts to warm the soil.

This sounds ideal for direct sowing, but instead, I sow my beans into deep root-trainers filled with peat-free compost to get them off to a good start. Once watered in, I keep the tray in the greenhouse and not long after they germinate, I move them into my sheltered cold frame. After the last frost, I'll plant them into an area enriched with well-rotted compost, against a beanpole wigwam.

After plants have settled in, a beer trap and nasturtium plants are added to the area, too. The yeasty brew draws and traps the molluscs, whilst the nasturtiums lure black bean aphids away from the beans. I keep the plants well fed and watered, and harvest some of the fresh, tender pods during the growing season. From mid-August, I allow the pods to mature on the plant, continuing to water and feeding the plants to help fatten the beans inside. Once the pods start to rattle that's a sign that they are ready to harvest for dried beans. I bring them into the potting shed, where they continue to dry out until I notice pods beginning to snap open. Then I check them, discarding any with signs of bean weevil larvae, and store them in airtight containers in a cool dark location.

### ALSO TRY

**Borlotti** is a French bean usually, grown for drying, with a beautiful colour and patterning. Another prolific grower that I love is the **Majorcan pea bean**, a heritage variety producing a small two-toned round bean when dried. Or, how about a soya bean like **edamame 'Green Shell'** to enjoy the fresh beans of during the growing season and later, allow mature pods to dry for winter use.

**ABOVE** There are many varieties of bean that store well for next year
**RIGHT** The 'rattle-test' helps Rekha to time her bean harvest perfectly

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS; GETTY/VEIT STÖRMER/EYEEM

## TOP TIP

Before storing, dry the beans thoroughly by laying them in a single layer, in a warm, dry place. The beans are ready when your finger nail makes no indentation.

## Veggie 'meatballs'

*These tasty plant-based meatballs make a quick and easy mid-week meal*
**SERVES 2**

- 150g dried beans (or 300g cooked)
- 50g thick rolled oats
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 1 pinch chilli flakes
- Salt to taste
- 300g arrabbiata sauce
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil, for frying

METHOD

**1** Place the dried beans overnight in water, then boil until soft and drain.

**2** Soak the oats in water for a few minutes, then squeeze dry.

**3** Smash the drained beans. Add oats and all other ingredients except the arrabbiata sauce and oil. Mix well.

**4** Take tablespoons of the mixture and roll to create evenly sized balls.

**5** Fry the balls over a medium heat until golden brown all over.

**6** If there is much oil left, drain it off, then gently toss the sauce over the balls and cook for a further 15 minutes.

**7** Serve hot with butter naan, red onion slices and lime wedges.

# September's allotment plan

## SOW

☐ **Winter salads** Leaves such as 'Winter Density' and rocket should be sown under cover. Prick out and continue to grow under protection over the winter months.

☐ **Winter onions** Thin them out when the seedlings are 3cm tall. Use the pulled out thinnings in the kitchen in place of chives.

## HARVEST

☐ **Continue** to pick fruit at intervals from your autumn-fruiting raspberry plants. Keep them well protected against visiting birds feasting on the berries.

☐ **Store** beetroot in boxes with a mixture of sand and dry, spent compost, in the greenhouse or shed. If your winters are mild, beetroot may keep in the soil.

☐ **Lift** carrots as and when needed. Continue to keep the plants protected with a layer of enviromesh, as carrot root fly is prevalent for another few weeks.

☐ **Harvest** larger turnips – those sitting proud above soil level – to make space for the smaller ones to grow.

☐ **Check** late varieties of sweetcorn for harvest. A tell-tale sign that they may be ripe is the change in colour of the beards, from creamy yellow to toasted brown.

## JOBS

☐ **Remove** leaves around winter squashes to expose them to light and help ensure even ripening.

☐ **Continue** to apply weekly seaweed feed in the greenhouse. Chilli and pepper plants will continue to produce flowers as their fruits are harvested.

☐ **Clear** bare areas after a harvest. Sow an all-rounder green manure like phacelia to help lock in soil nutrients and prevent erosion over winter.

☐ **Place** pots of tender perennial herbs like lemon verbena under cover or in a sheltered position over winter.

PHOTOS: PAUL DEBOIS; GETTY/PAULA CONNELLY/EVGENIJ SISKOV/EYEEM

**NEXT MONTH** Rekha tops off the growing season with a tasty Indian pickle-inspired apple slaw

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Enjoy your garden like never before with the Stockholm Chaise Lounge Set with Armchair. This set includes, 1-chaise seat, a 2-seater sofa, a spacious armchair and a wood-effect table with open storage underneath. Made from polyrattan which gives durability and means virtually no maintenance needed. The plump seat and back cushions have polyspun covers so soft to touch, which can be removed to clean.

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The modern Marrakesh Garden Lounge Set is perfect for entertaining while also being extremely durable. The set sits up to 5 people and comes with a handy square coffee table. There's practical slatted detailing either side of the sofa, perfect for placing your drinks, books or snacks whilst entertaining. The chunky seat and back cushions have polyspun covers that can be removed for washing to keep that fresh look.

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# Bounty on a budget

## SEED SOWING

**In this fifth of a six-part series, expert grower Sally Nex shows how to get the most out of your plot, with advice on seed sowing now so you can be one step ahead for next year's harvests**

**The daily routine in the veg garden** takes on more urgency in September. There's a faint whiff of winter in the air on cooler evenings, the first fallen leaves are crackling underfoot, and you know you've just a month or so of good weather left to get your bounty in and safely stored.

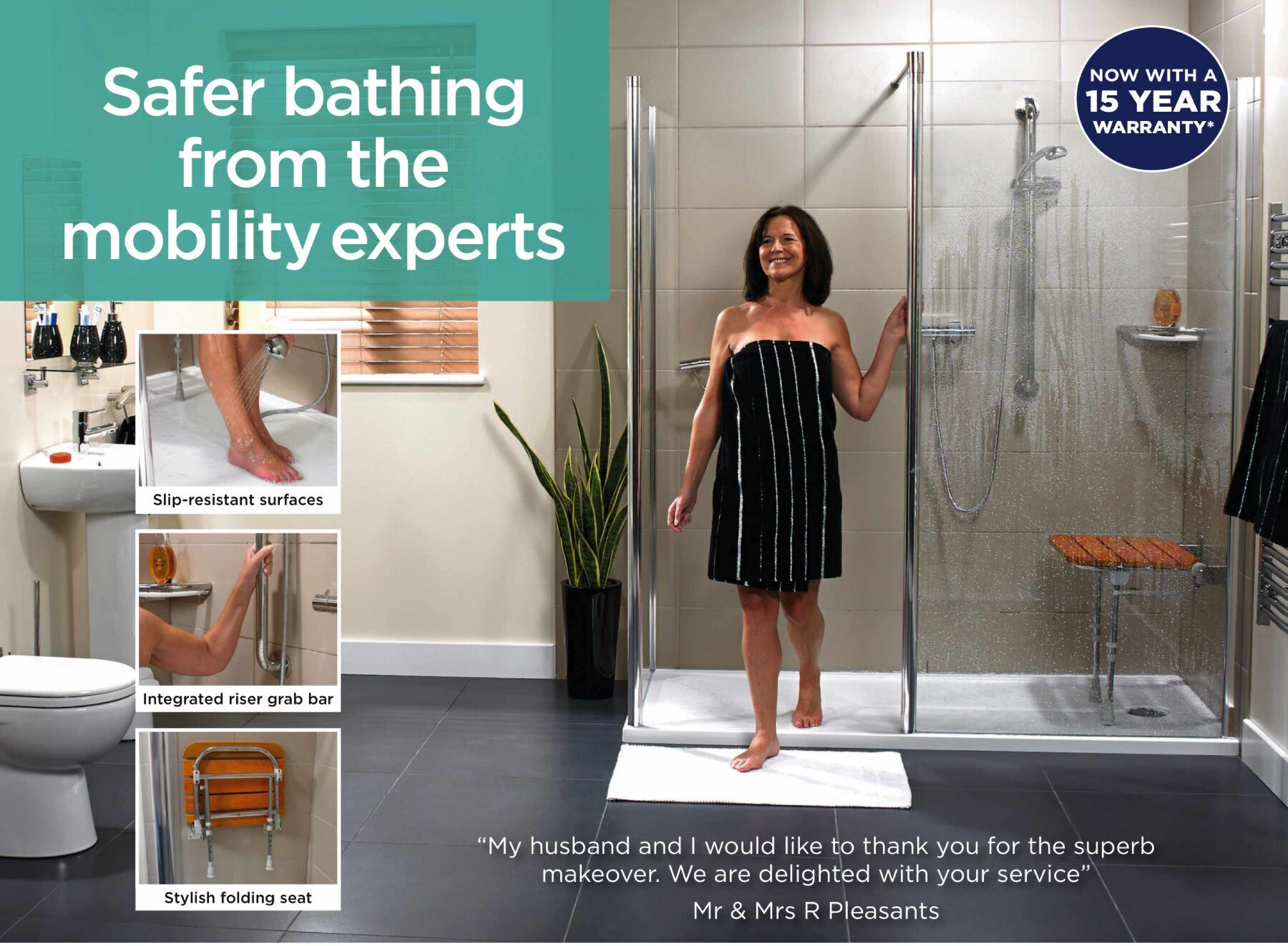
At the same time, you're filling seed trays again: sow early spring crops now and you can get picking again as soon as possible next year. The more you do to provide yourself with homegrown food year round, the less you'll visit the fresh food aisle in the supermarket and the lower your carbon footprint will be. You'll save yourself a small fortune, too, especially nowadays with food prices rising almost every time you shop.

This month we're sharing tips for making the transition into autumn as smooth as possible, and for setting up your veg patch ready to do it all again next year!

> *" The more you do to provide yourself with homegrown food year round, the less you'll visit the fresh food aisle in the supermarket and the lower your carbon footprint will be "*

ALL PHOTOS: JASON INGRAM

Make containers from recycled loo-roll tubes or newspaper to sow your seeds into as a sustainable alternative to plastic pots and trays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## Ready to pick

Squash and pumpkins are colouring up beautifully now. Take off any leaves that are shading fruits to let the sun ripen their skins and raise larger squash on bricks so air can circulate underneath. You'll know they're ready to harvest when you knock them and they sound hollow – the plants also start dying back naturally. Cut fruits with about 10cm of stalk intact and leave in a greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill indoors for two weeks to harden the skins. They'll keep for months somewhere dry and frost free.

Dig up your maincrop potatoes, too. These are slow-maturing varieties that you can store, keeping you in chemical-free, zero-food-miles spuds well into winter. Check your harvest and set aside any damaged tubers for eating straightaway, then dry off the rest in the sun for two hours. Brush off excess dirt (no need to wash them), then store them in a frost-free dark place in paper or hessian sacks.

**ABOVE: Check your harvested potatoes for signs of damage before storing them**
**RIGHT: September is harvest time for many crops, including squashes beans, beetroot and tomatoes**

ZEROFIT

# THE WORLD'S WARMEST BASELAYER®

**The kaleidoscope of colours that inhabited your garden in the summer months are fading, but Japanese brand Zerofit has designed a range of best-in-class baselayers for gardeners who refuse to let colder temperatures stop them from planting bulbs and digging beds this autumn and winter. Created by a passionate team of baselayer specialists, the Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate is the most technically advanced baselayer on the planet and completely different to any other product you've ever worn.**

## WHAT MAKES IT SO GOOD?

### 1. It's five times warmer than a standard baselayer

That is quite a claim, but it's a fact. Tested at the iconic Boken Institute in Osaka, the Heatrub Ultimate baselayer recorded a Heat Retention Rating of 0.78; a standard baselayer would have a rating of between 0.1 to 0.14. And for reference, a jumper would typically have a rating of 0.3. The Ultimate performs best in a temperature range of -10º Celsius thru 10º Celsius – so even in the coldest of conditions in your garden, it will keep you toasty warm.

### 2. Instant warmth the moment you put it on

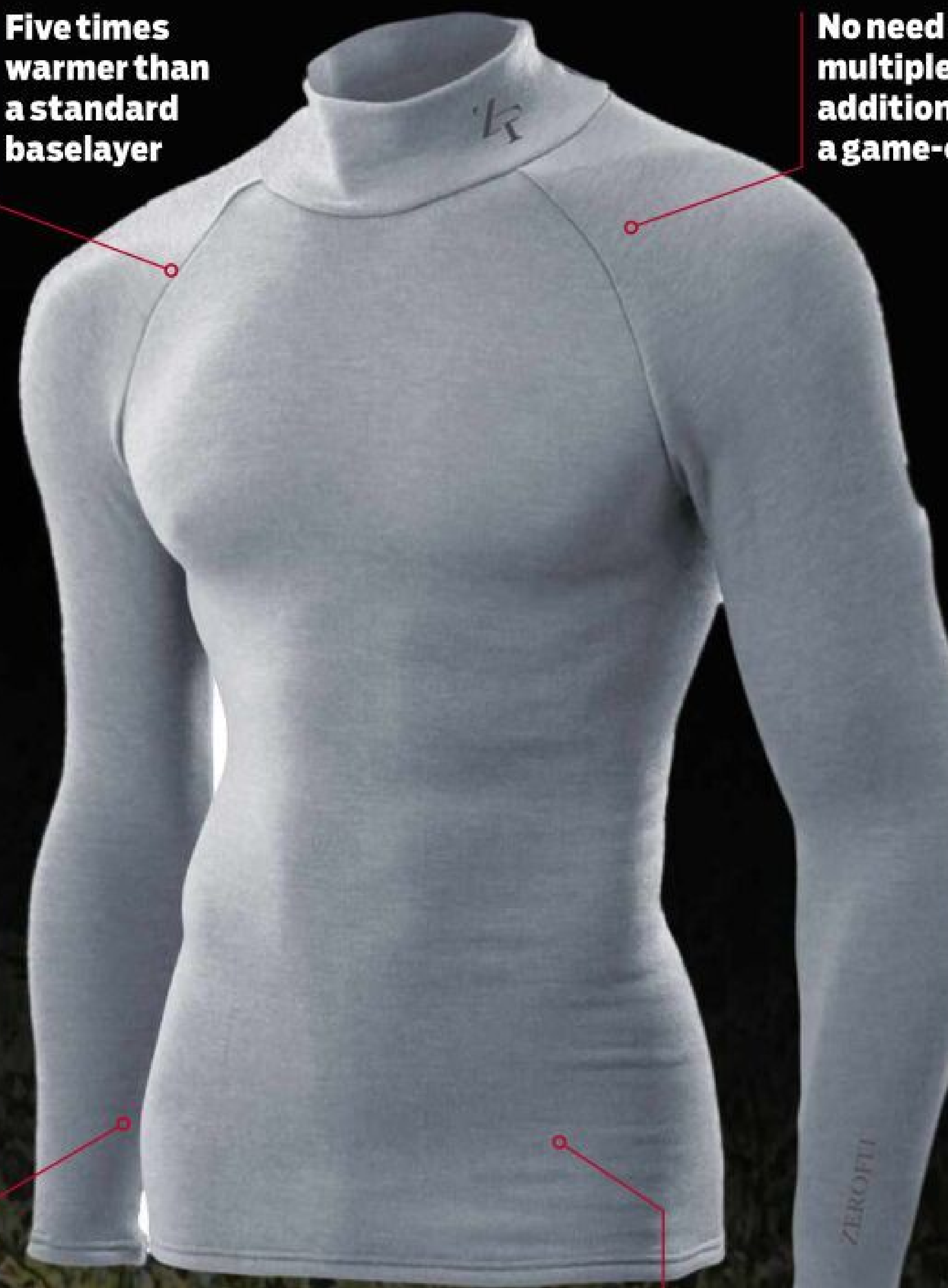
A standard baselayer traps body heat between your skin and the material, so it takes a little time before you feel the benefits. With Zerofit, five separate fabrics, along with a patented knitting process, create instant warmth as soon as you pull it on. We don't engineer our products with compression for heat as a technology, unlike other brands. The unique fabric mix means you don't need the tightness in order for it to work, making it super comfortable too – like a heated basleayer blanket.

### 3. Fewer layers, greater warmth and freedom to move

The Ultimate is the ideal product for people who dislike traditional tight baselayers. Over the years, you may well have 'layered up' in order to combat the effects of cold weather. This is where we are changing the game. The Heatrub Ultimate is so good at keeping you warm, you won't need multiple additional layers, giving you greater freedom to stretch, move and work on your garden more easily. In short, fewer layers yet greater warmth.

### 4. Heating from top to toe

Innovative 'Heat Threads' positioned on the inside of the garment gently rub against your skin as you move, which creates positive warmth across your body, and also means this instant heat is retained. The Heatrub Ultimate Leggings and Heatrub Ultimate Socks are made from the same material and work in exactly the same way. For milder conditions, the Heatrub Move baselayer is twice as warm as a standard model and works best between -5º and 12º Celsius.


Five times warmer than a standard baselayer
No need for multiple additional layers – a game-changer
Instant heat the moment you put it on
Heating from top to toe

Trustpilot

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**Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate baselayer (available in Black, White, Grey, Green, Navy and Red) – £55 ■ Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate leggings (available in Black) – £55 ■ Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate socks (available in Black) - £25 ■ Zerofit Heatrub Move baselayer (available in black, white and titanium) - £40**

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## Sow it now

Happy New Year! For veg growers the next season starts in September, when you begin sowing overwintering veg – hardier varieties designed to tough out the winter as seedlings before bursting into life in early spring so you can pick homegrown crops that bit sooner.

Plant autumn-sown onions (sometimes sold as Japanese onions) from organically grown sets. Bury just below ground, 10-15cm apart. They'll have grown into sturdy seedlings once winter sets in, giving them a head start in spring, and by June they'll be ready to pull – weeks earlier than maincrop onions.

Sow hardy broad beans like 'Aquadulce Claudia' straight into beds now or into saved loo roll inners. Once germinated, move outdoors into a cold frame or onto a shelf safe from slugs and mice for winter; then plant out in February for picking from next May. Early crops will escape the worst of blackfly infestations next summer.

Plant onion sets outdoors in September for a crop in early summer

Grow herbs such as chives near the kitchen so you can use them at their freshest

## Plan ahead

Every veg grower ends up with a mountain of produce to pick all at once as the season draws to a close – and that's a good thing, as storing your surplus carefully means you can eat low-carbon, super-tasty homegrown veg throughout winter. Everything you freeze contributes to your winter supplies. Freeze tomatoes in 400g batches so each batch replaces a tin of tomatoes: chop into quarters, then cook with a little olive oil and some salt and pepper until they collapse, then cool and freeze.

You can also snip fresh herbs well into winter if you pot up mint, chives and marjoram now and plant yourself a windowsill herb farm. Add to your selection by sowing parsley, chervil and small-leaved Greek basil – which copes with cool weather and lower light levels better than sweet basil – direct into pots for the kitchen windowsill.

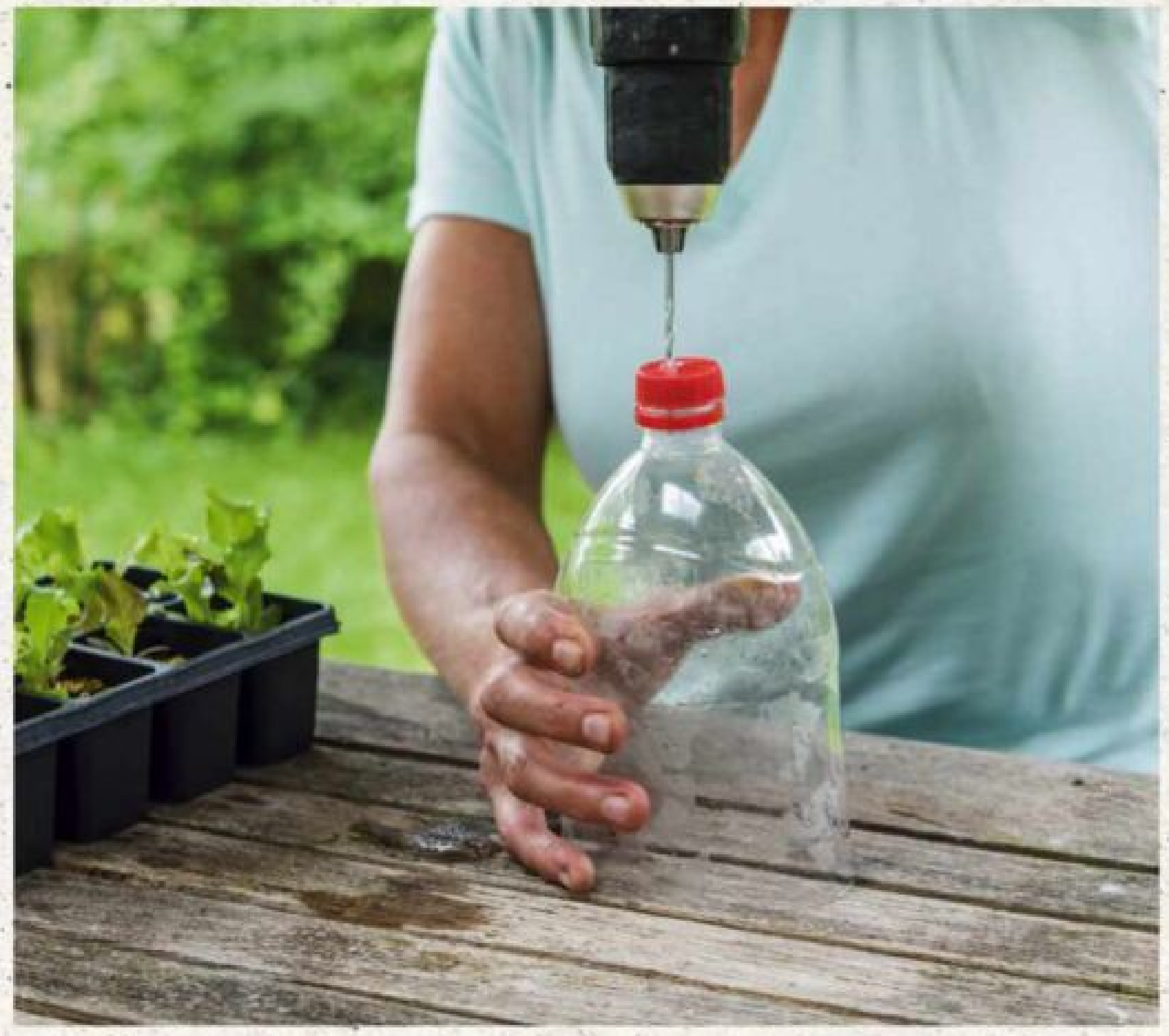
# Make a: *self-watering windowsill planter*

This simple self-watering planter is easy to make using a recycled plastic drinks bottle and some twine. Add your plant and some water, then pop it on your kitchen windowsill

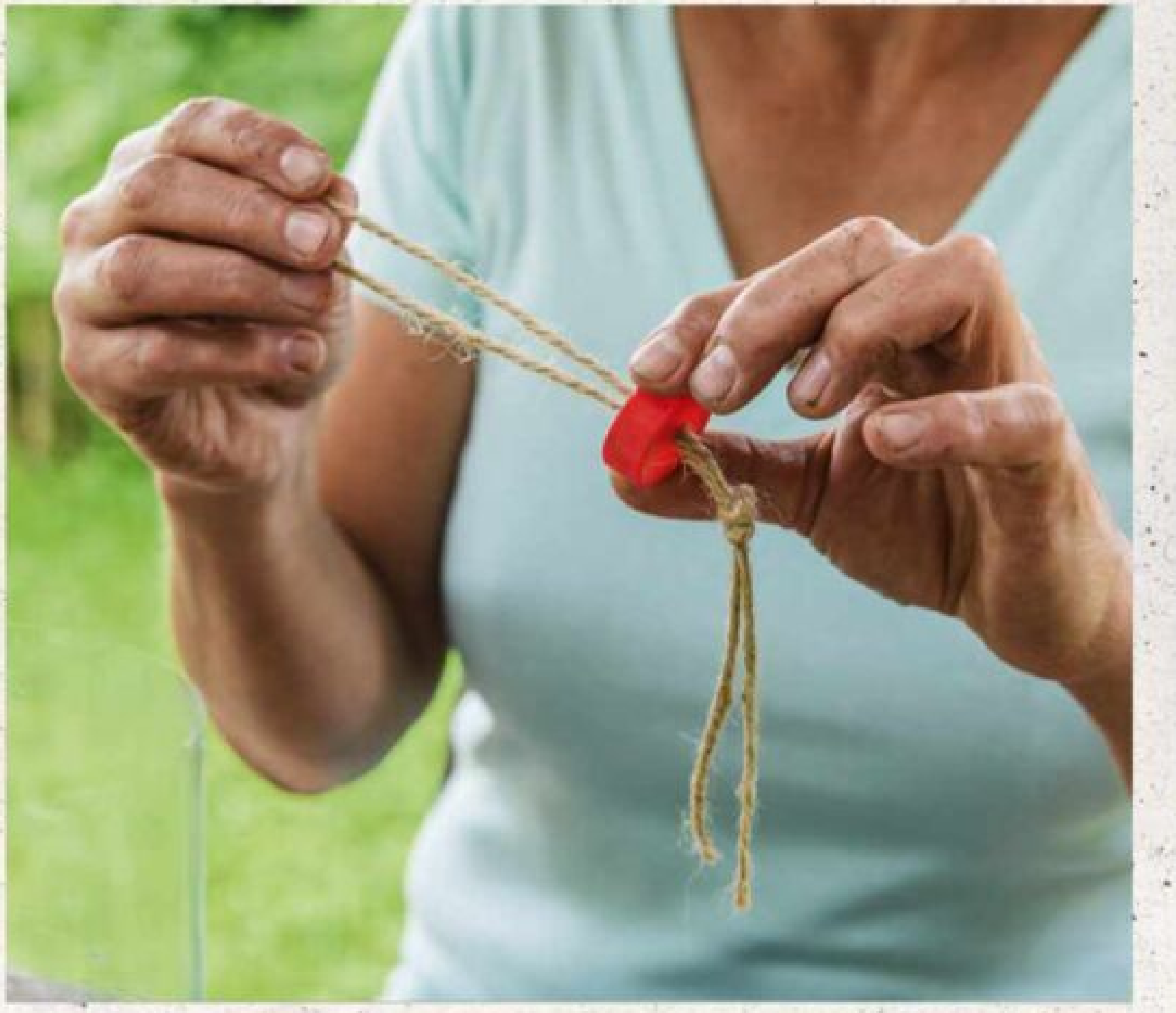
## Your step-by-step guide

Indoor gardening gets a lot more inviting as the weather chills into autumn and winter. You don't have to stick to houseplants, either: windowsills make great mini allotments, and if you pack them with salads and herbs now, they'll keep you picking long after your garden has gone to sleep. Sow pea shoots, plant winter lettuce seedlings and pot up herbs such as chives, mint and parsley into plastic drinks bottles repurposed as self-watering planters and they'll practically look after themselves.

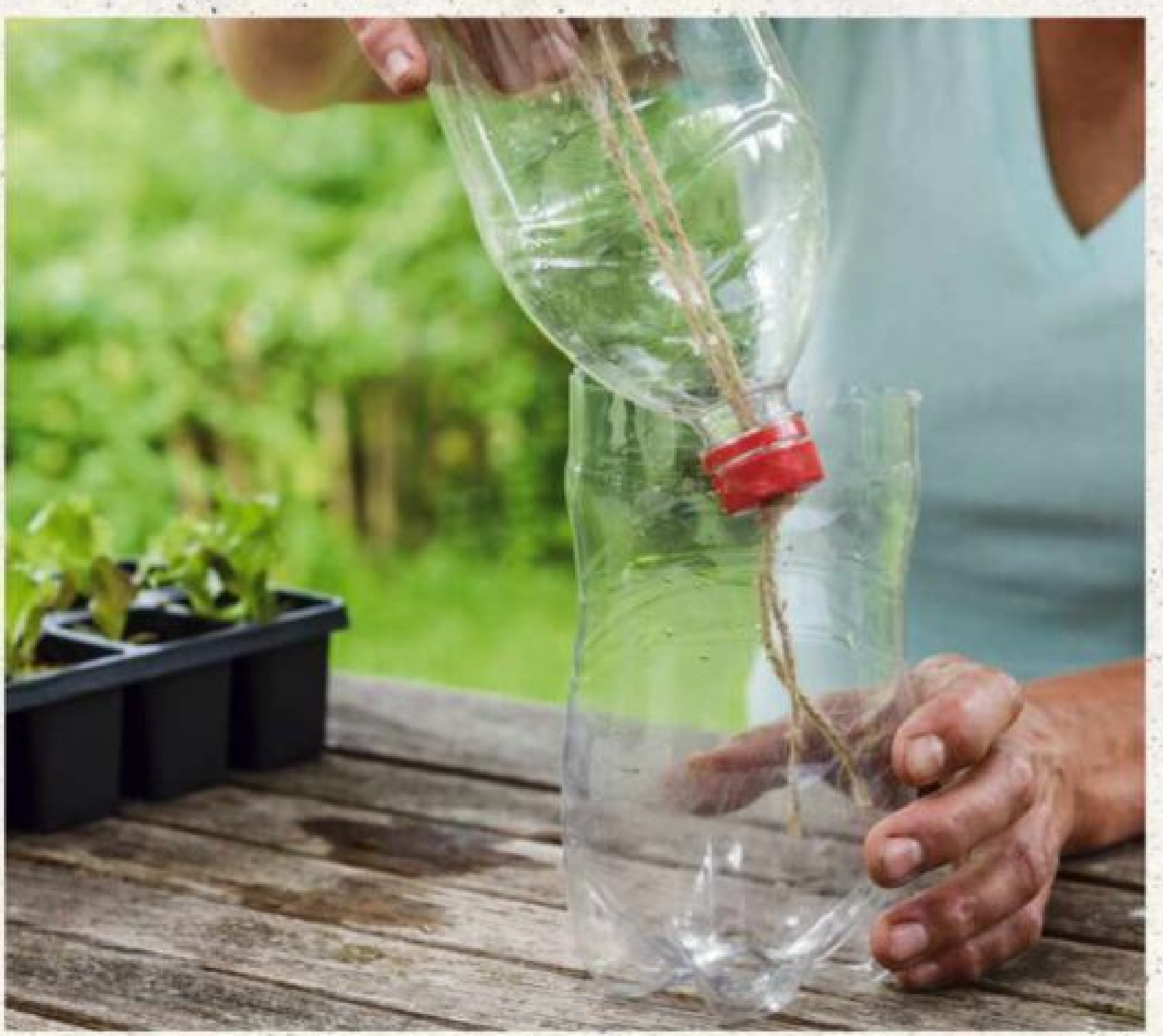
1 **TAKE a two-litre plastic drinks bottle and carefully cut it in half. Then drill a small hole through the lid.**



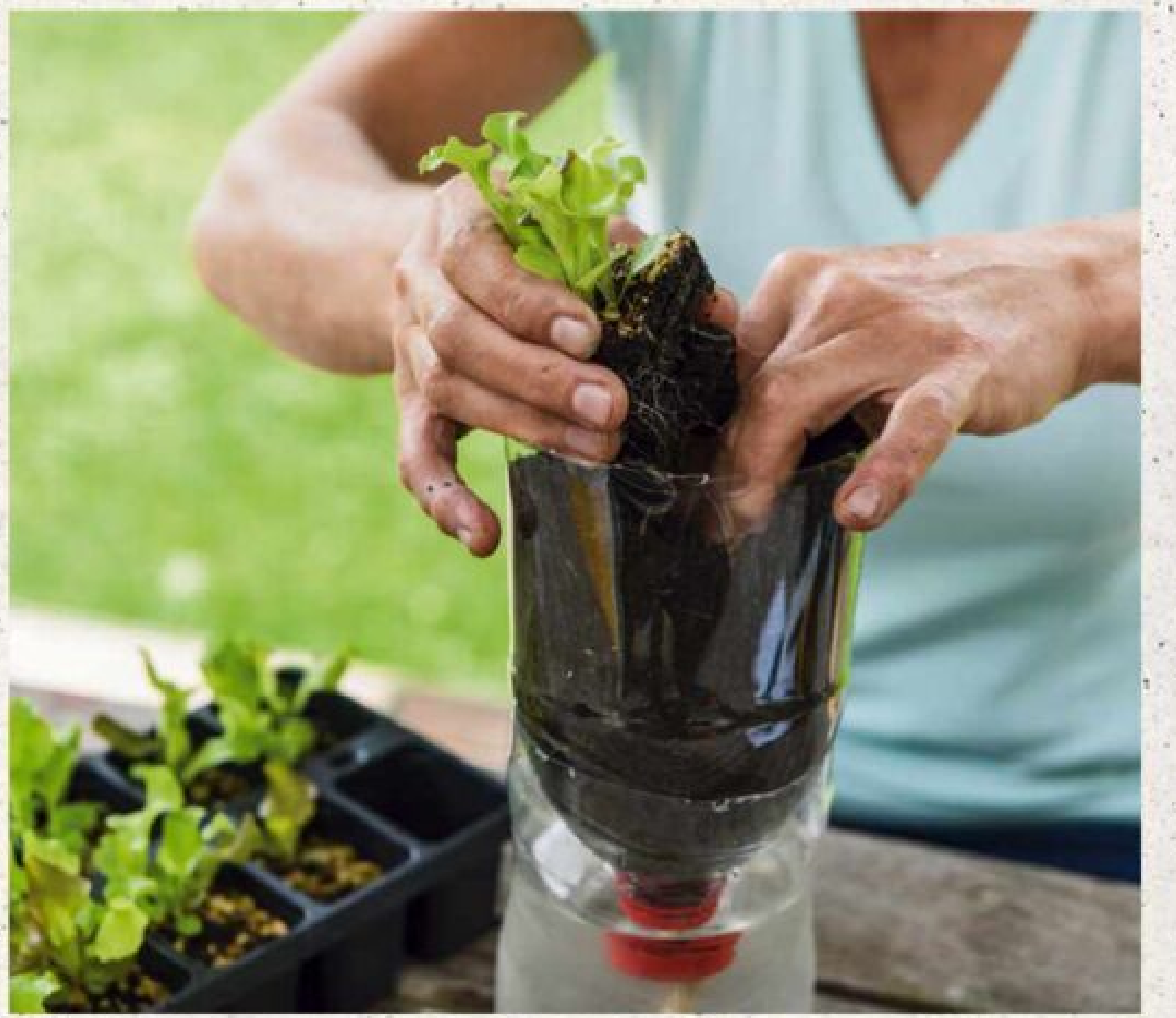
2 **MAKE a loop using approx. 50cm of jute garden twine, knotting the ends together at around 15cm, as shown. Thread through the hole, pulling the knot snug against the bottle lid.**



3 **POUR water into the bottom half of the bottle – about halfway – then turn the top half upside down and slot it in so the string ends dangle down into the reservoir.**



4 **FILL the top half with compost and sow or plant into the top. Water once from above. The twine will wick up water into the compost, keeping it damp. Top up the reservoir water every 2-3 weeks as the level falls.**



## More thrifty eco ideas

■ **Make additive-free sweets** Fruit leathers are a great way to deal with surplus fruit and give your kids a healthy alternative to commercial sweets. Cook berries into a purée, then pour onto a lined baking sheet in a thin layer. Bake very slowly on your oven's lowest setting for several hours until dry but still flexible. Cut into strips and roll up for lunchbox snacks.

■ **Use cooking water for watering plants** Save the (unsalted) water you use to cook veg or boil eggs, allow to cool then use it to water the veg garden. You'll save precious tap water and give your plants a little pick-me-up too, as the water is full of dissolved nutrients.

■ **Buy secondhand hessian sacks for storing produce** Strong, biodegradable hessian sacks are widely used to carry products such as coffee beans. After traders have finished with them they're often sold via online auction sites where you can pick them up cheaply to use for storing potatoes in winter.

■ **Turn pallets into storage crates** Make storage crates out of second-hand pallet wood for packing root veg safely for winter (pallet wood makes great racks for storing apples and drying onions).

**NEXT MONTH** In the final part of her series Sally shows how to make eco plant protectors for cool weather

# GARDEN-READY PANSIES

BUY 10, GET 10 FREE!

## Fill baskets and pots with pansies to lift the winter gloom

### Pansy Cascadia XL Trailing

An improved variety of an old favourite that will look beautiful in hanging baskets. Easy to grow, the extra-large flowers come in a mix of yellow, purple and red hues, and will gently cascade over the sides of pots and baskets. Winter hardy.

**Trail x Spread** 50cm x 25cm

**Flowers** Sep-Mar

- 10 garden-ready plants **£14.99**

**Buy 10, get 10 free SAVE £14.99** *(401193)*

- 60 medium plug plants **£17.99**

**SAVE £2** *(401172)*

### Pansy Can Can

In a variety of pastel shades, each bloom has ruffled edges and a striking dark centre.

**H x S** 25cm x 25cm

**F** Mov-Mar

- 10 garden-ready plants **£9.99 SAVE £5** *(401191)*
- 60 medium plug plants **£17.99 SAVE £2** *(401161)*

### Easy-fill hanging baskets

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# HOW TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP AND IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

## *Discover how wool is better for You, and better for the Planet*

*The secret to a good sleep is to have your body temperature regulated, so you go into a deep, dormant sleep allowing the body to repair cells, fight illness and generally rejuvenate itself*

**There was a time when everyone in the UK slept under wool, but as many of you may well remember they were itchy and heavy and by the time winter came you were locked down under three blankets and even a quilt eiderdown. Oh happy days! And we had to make the bed up every day; all those blankets.**

After the Second World War, more people travelled abroad where they discovered French wine, cheeses and the 'continental quilt', which eventually became known as the duvet. It was nice and snuggly at night and you didn't have to make the bed, just shake it out.

But since then, times have changed for the better. The vast majority of us now have double glazing and central heating as well as loft insulation and so on.

Our houses are warmer, our beds are warmer and our duvets seem to have become hotter.

### THE SECRET TO A GOOD SLEEP

The secret to a good sleep is to have your body temperature regulated, so you go into a deep, dormant sleep allowing the body to repair cells, fight illness and generally rejuvenate itself.

To go into that deep, dormant state our blood pressure must drop, our heart rate must go down, but most of all, our temperature has to drop.

Under normal duvet fillings, polyester, feather and even the most expensive down duvet, only one thing can happen during the night: your temperature will rise because they're all insulators. So, during the night you toss and turn or throw the duvet off in order to cool your body down. This leads to disturbed sleep.

But help is at hand with a British-made wool Baavet, finely combed pure wool encased in a high-quality pure cotton outer, a wool duvet.

### WOOL IS A TEMPERATURE REGULATOR

Not many people know that a sheep's wool is how it regulates its temperature. Think about it, where are all the dead sheep in summer heat waves with their big woolly coats if they haven't been shorn? They may pant a bit, but they don't die. Wool is the only fibre on the planet that can do this due to the structure of each fibre.

### WOOL IS NATURALLY HYPOALLERGENIC

**Wool naturally wicks away moisture:** (it's the way a sheep sweats).

This means that moulds can't develop nor mould spores, as long as you keep your Baavet dry. The secret is in the structure of the fibres, which are hollow, and absorb moisture leaving the surface of the fibre dry. Wool can absorb 30% of its own weight in moisture. **ALSO DUST MITES HATE WOOL** and can't survive because of the very dry nature of the surface of the fibres.

**AND BACTERIA CAN'T SURVIVE IN WOOL so, no sweat; no dust mites; no bacteria** all making wool incredibly clean and naturally hypoallergenic. Normally you don't have to wash your Baavet duvet, you simply need to air it on a fine sunny day. For serious soiling see care label.

And it's **ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AND MORE SUSTAINABLE.**

### HOW LONG WILL YOUR BAAVET LAST?

As long as you look after it, then it should last a lifetime.

### ARE WOOL DUVETS TOG RATED?

No, because wool regulates heat. However the more wool in a duvet the warmer it will be, like a mountain sheep has a big heavy fleece which is much warmer than lowland shorter fleece, obvious really.

So we have **4 Baavet duvet options** and approximate TOG ratings, remember wool is both cooler and warmer than other duvet fillings and not everyone is the same nor is every house.

**Super Light** (2-4 tog); **Light** (4-8 tog); **Medium** (8-12 tog) and **Winter weight** (12+ tog).

When choosing your duvet, just think of what Tog you use mainly during the year; and how cold or warm your house is.

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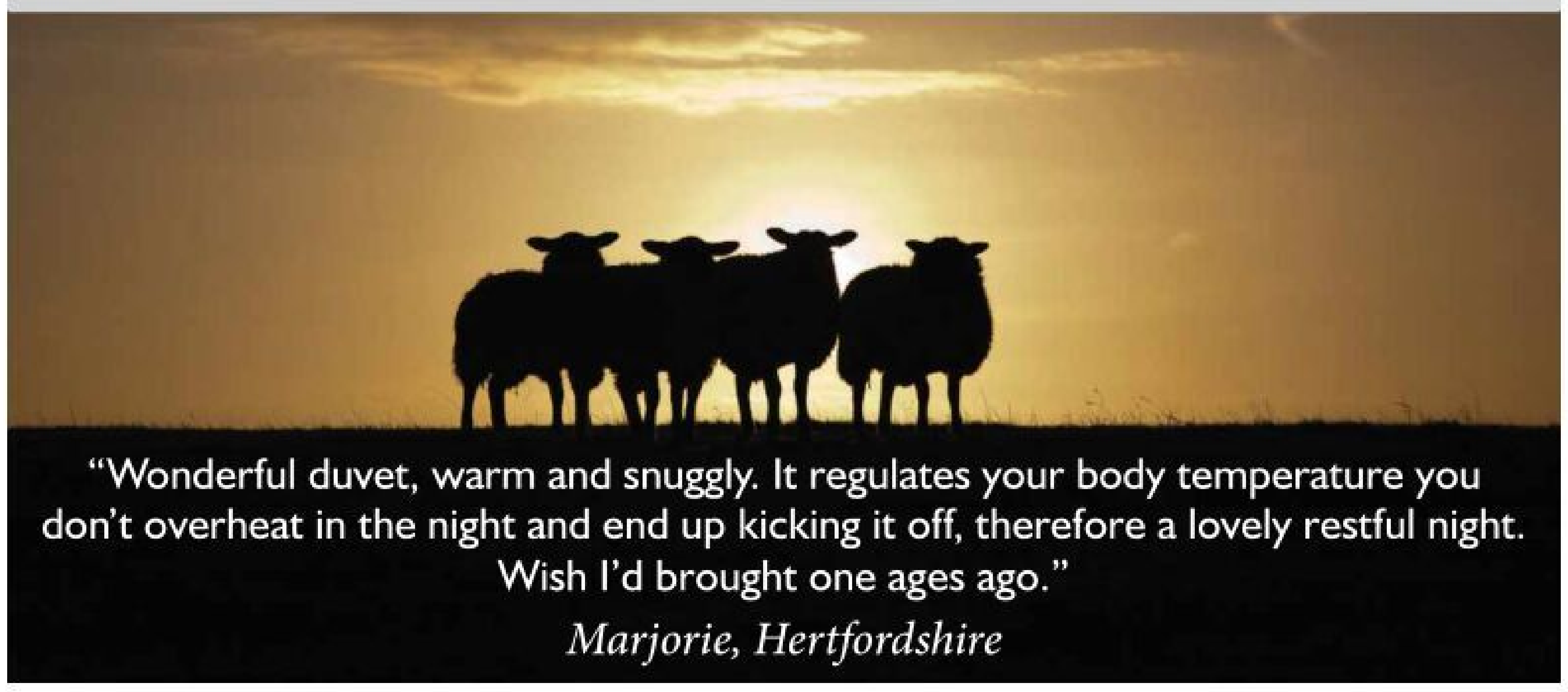
## *It's more than just a duvet, it's a Baavet*



"Wonderful duvet, warm and snuggly. It regulates your body temperature you don't overheat in the night and end up kicking it off, therefore a lovely restful night. Wish I'd brought one ages ago."

*Marjorie, Hertfordshire*

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## September

# Growing guide

Plant soft fruit, fill any gaps with quick-growing salad crops and start off your winter veg

**Sow indoors** 🟪 **Plant/sow outdoors** 🟩 **Harvest** 🟧

| Key crops for September | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blackcurrants | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 |
| Calabrese | | | 🟪 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | | |
| Garlic | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 |
| Onions | 🟪 | 🟪 | 🟩 | 🟩 | | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | | | |
| Perpetual spinach | | | 🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩 |
| Raspberries | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩 |
| Rocket | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟧 |
| Strawberries | | | | 🟩 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | |
| Winter purslane (miner's lettuce) | 🟧 | | | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | 🟩<br>🟧 | | | |
| Winter radishes | 🟧 | 🟧 | | | | | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 |

**Blackcurrants**

Famed for their high vitamin C content, these fruits are also loaded with other plant compounds that help support our immune response.

**Tips** Blackcurrants bought in pots are best planted from autumn to spring – bare-root plants are available at this time too. **Plant** ↓ 5cm deeper than previously **Final spacing** ↔ 2m apart ⤢ 2m between rows

**Calabrese**

Nutrient-rich calabrese is a useful source of bone-building nutrients, including calcium, phosphorus and vitamin K.

**Tips** Once the main head has been harvested, the sideshoots will go on to produce secondary, smaller heads. **Sow** ↓ 2cm deep **Final spacing** ↔ 30cm apart ⤢ 45cm between rows

**Garlic**

Rich in heart-healthy compounds, as well as potassium and vitamin C. Crush or chop and add towards the end of cooking for optimal effect.

**Tips** Plant cloves deeper in light soil. Apply a general-purpose feed from February and nip out any flower buds that appear. **Plant** ↓ 2cm deep **Final spacing** ↔ 18cm apart ⤢ 30cm between rows

**Onions**

Packed with active plant compounds, onions may help you breathe more easily, support the heart and digestion, and improve gut health.

**Tips** Sow seeds outdoors this month in a warm, sunny spot into finely raked soil. Wait until spring to thin out the seedlings. **Sow** ↓ 1.5cm deep **Final spacing** ↔ 8cm apart ⤢ 38cm between rows

**Perpetual spinach**

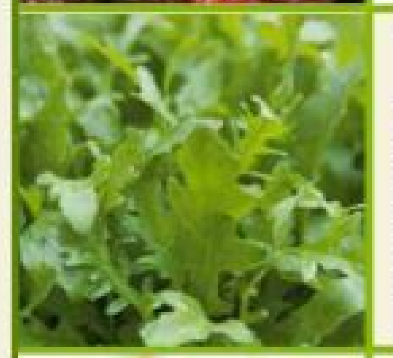
Easy to grow and a vigorous crop, these leafy greens are rich in vitamin C and folate, which may give your energy levels a boost.

**Tips** Sow now and overwinter the young plants under fleece to enjoy leafy harvests from early spring onwards. **Sow** ↓ 2.5cm deep **Final spacing** ↔ 20cm apart ⤢ 45cm between rows

**Raspberries**

These delicious berries can help to regulate blood sugar levels. They're low in calories and high in protective plant chemicals and fibre.

**Tips** Water regularly in the first year to help plants establish well and mulch with garden compost every autumn. **Plant** ↓ at same level as previously **Final spacing** ↔ 35-45cm apart ⤢ 1.5-2m between rows



**Rocket**

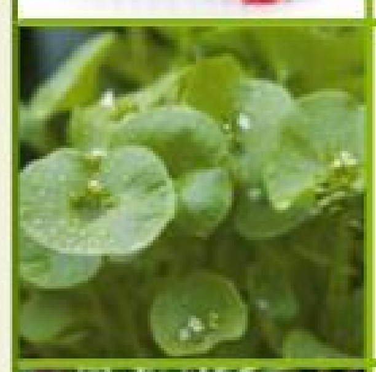
A source of potassium, folate and vitamin C, these heart-healthy leaves add more than a flavour-packed bite to your salads.

**Tips** Rocket will keep producing leaves all winter if you protect plants with horticultural fleece or cloches from October onwards. **Sow** ↓ 1cm deep **Final spacing** ↔ 15cm apart ⤢ 15cm between rows

**Strawberries**

The 'good-for-you' polyphenols in strawberries may be beneficial against the effects of conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

**Tips** Keep fruits safe from slugs by planting in large pots or hanging baskets, but don't let the compost dry out. **Plant** ↓ with the crown at soil level **Final spacing** ↔ 38cm apart ⤢ 75cm between rows



**Winter purslane (miner's lettuce)**

A fresh-tasting addition to winter salads and packed with immune-supportive vitamin C and beta-carotene, which can help to fight infections.

**Tips** Add the succulent leaves, stems and flowers to winter salads. Sow small batches regularly, in pots or in the ground. **Sow** ↓ 1cm deep **Final spacing** ↔ 15cm apart ⤢ 23cm between rows

**Winter radishes**

These cabbage relatives offer immune-enhancing vitamins as well as valuable phytonutrients, including quercetin and ferulic acid.

**Tips** Sow in part-shade and keep the soil moist to encourage germination and fast growth. Harvest roots when 4-5cm in diameter. **Sow** ↓ 1cm deep **Final spacing** ↔ 23cm apart ⤢ 30cm between rows

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/what-to-do-now** for more advice on the best crops to sow and plant this month, and how to do it

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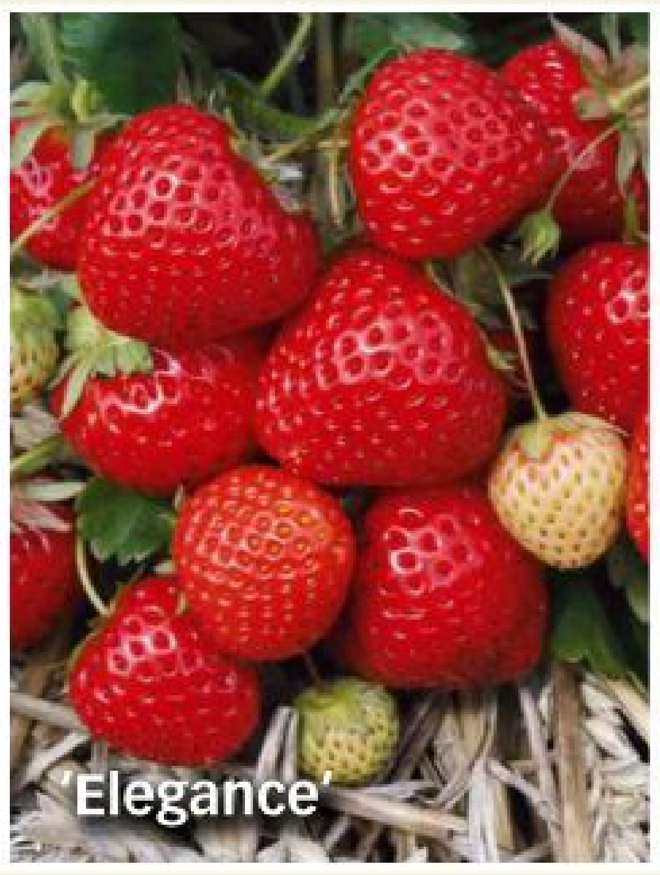

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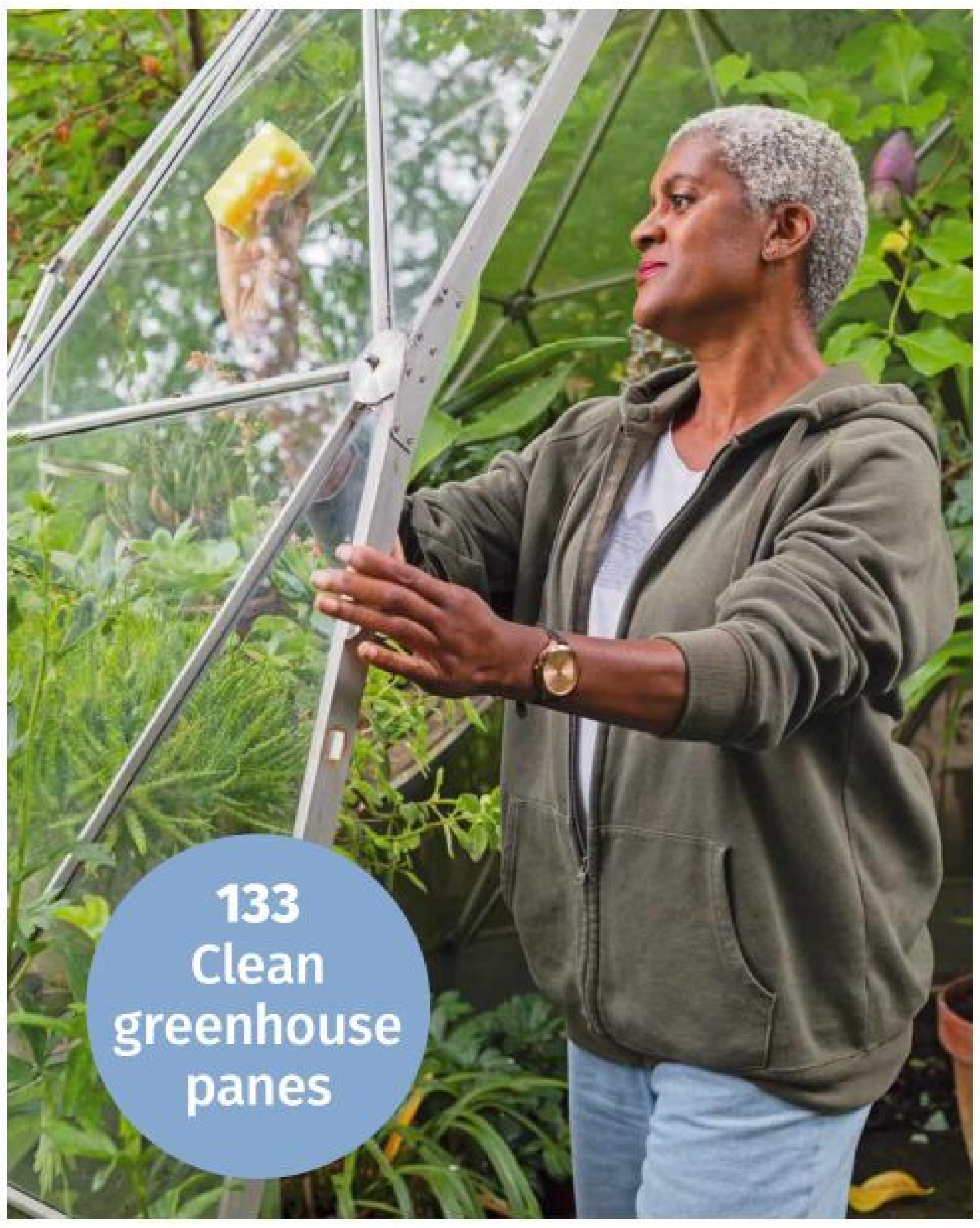
## Your 11-page monthly planner

# WHAT TO DO NOW

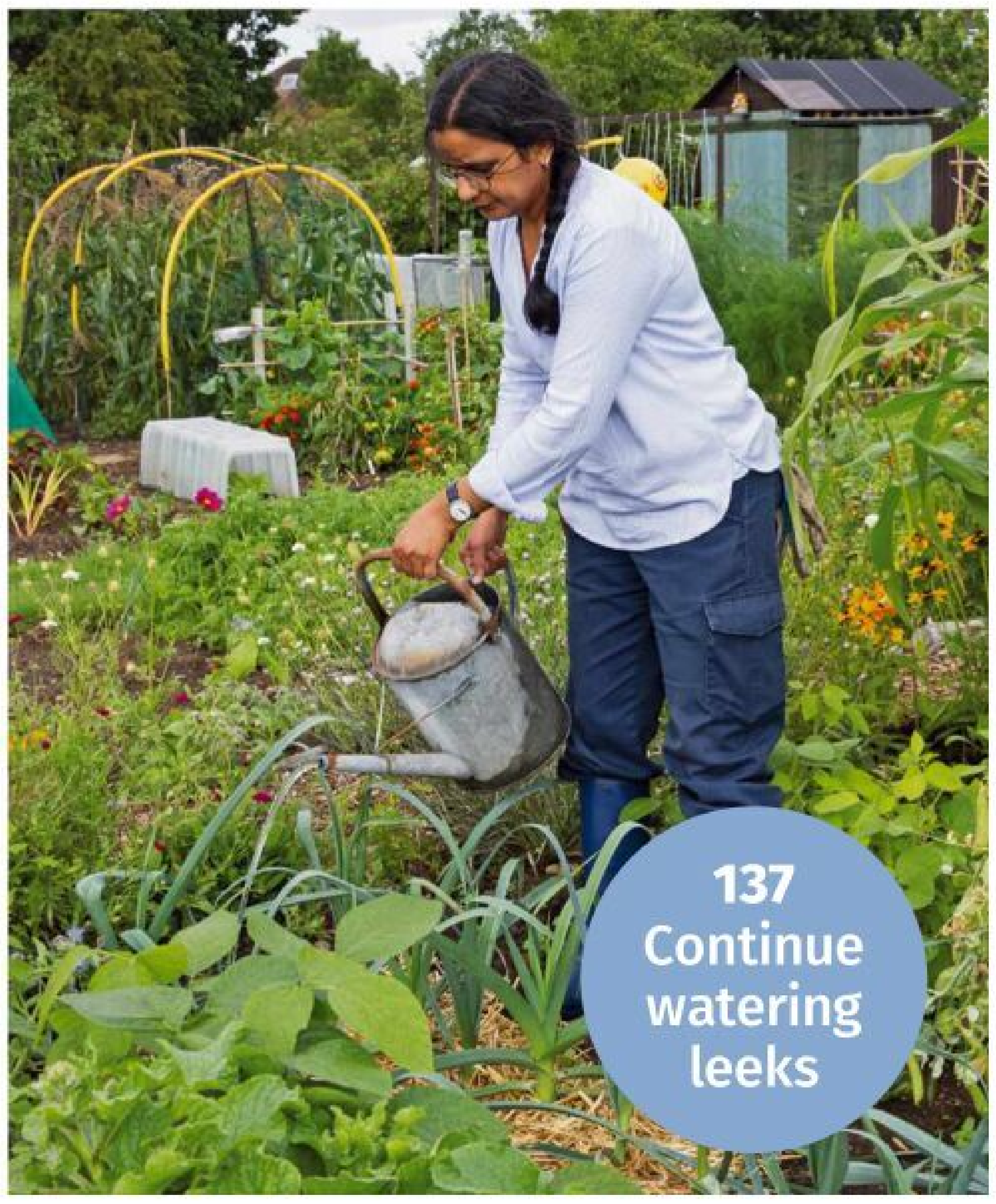
### 50 things to do this month from the *Gardeners' World* team


133
Clean greenhouse panes

126
Prepare beds for garlic

129
Deadhead marigolds for more blooms

140
Plant out large evergreens


137
Continue watering leeks

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS; NEIL HEPWORTH; JASON INGRAM

**PLUS** ■ Harvest winter squashes ■ Tidy up evergreen ferns ■ Prune lavender ■ Repair damaged lawns ■ Save poppy seeds

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GWHY

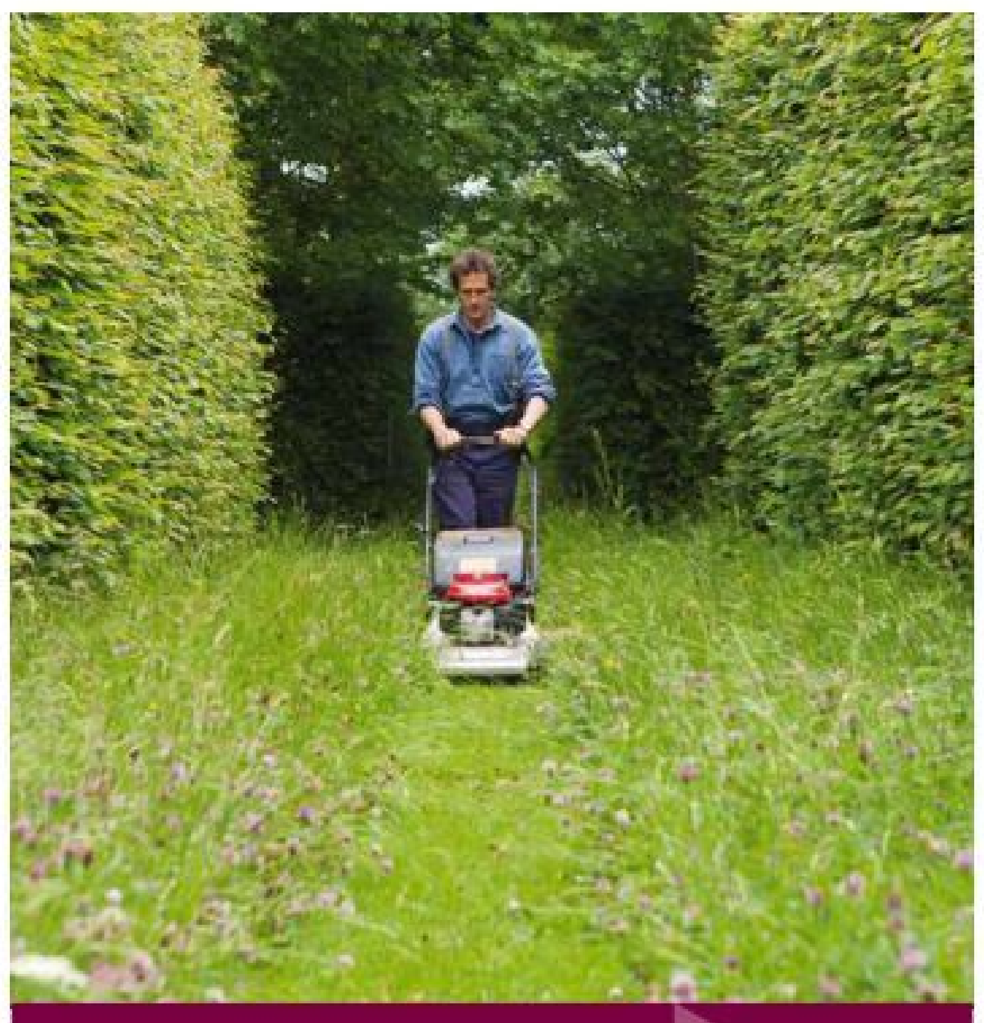
**Before scattering seed, mow your lawn to expose the soil and ensure germination**

# Monty's month

**September has always been a good** month but climate change has, it seems, made it better. It is now a month of golden light, warm days and cool nights, with enough of summer lingering to ameliorate the gentle encroachment of autumn into its days.

It is also the perfect time to sow grass seed and, more interestingly, a wildflower mix into grass to create a new wildflower meadow, because the soil is warm and yet there is likely to be enough rainfall, or at least dew, to provide the necessary moisture. When preparing an existing lawn or area of long grass for wildflower seed, it is essential to mow it as short as possible with the aim of exposing plenty of bare soil. Gather all the clippings and then rake or scarify the surface to expose more soil so it looks ripped back to the bone! This ensures that seeds get the contact with the soil they need for successful germination. The grass can then be allowed to grow a little longer before the onset of winter.

PHOTOS: JASON INGRAM



**WATCH** videos and get tips at **GardenersWorld.com/mow-long-grass**

# Start planting garlic now

**Although garlic can be planted** at any time in autumn, September is ideal. This gives it the maximum possible time to have the sustained cold period that it needs for the individual cloves to form properly.

I like to plant hardneck garlic and elephant garlic in September, and a second batch of softneck ones in October. This staggers planting and harvesting but gives both a fighting chance of developing well.

Softneck varieties such as 'Solent Wight' or 'Germidour' are smaller but keep much better than hardneck varieties such as 'Sultop' and 'Sprint' – these have a woody scape around which the cloves cluster. They need rich but free-draining soil, so I use a container or raised bed, and the individual cloves should be planted (pointy end up) 6-9 inches (15-23cm) apart in rows or a grid so that they are buried at least an inch (3cm) below the surface of the soil.

Water them in well, and keep them watered as the green shoots emerge and develop in spring.

**WATCH** videos and get planting tips at **GardenersWorld.com/grow-garlic**

**Make sure the bed is free of weeds before planting gralic cloves – the biggest cloves will produce the best results**

Rake and clear the lawn of debris before you scatter grass seed

Use a fork to break up compacted areas by wiggling it around in the soil

## Repair worn out lawn patches

Grass is tough but very easily damaged by quite low levels of wear and tear, so by the end of summer in a busy household it is very likely that every lawn or mown grass path will be showing signs of damage.

Using a wire rake, scratch the surface as vigorously as possible to remove all thatch and dead grass, and to expose as much soil as possible. Then you must open the ground out to counter the compaction that is inevitable for an area of grass that has footfall of any kind. For small areas, the easiest way to deal with this is simply to insert the tines of a fork and wiggle them around as deeply as possible, repeating every foot or so over the area you are to resow. Rake it level and sow grass seed thinly (remember that grass is a series of individual plants, so the more food and water available to each of these plants, the better they will blend and form a uniform green sward). Tread the seeds in lightly so they make firm contact with the soil, and then water them well and keep them watered.

You may have to put chicken wire or some pruned material around the patches to keep birds, children and dogs off them until the seeds germinate and the new grass is growing strongly – which it should do in a week or two.

---

**CARROTS**

**Although carrots can be left in the ground until the coldest winter weather, especially in free-draining soil, they are at their best in early autumn. They have a sweetness and an intense carroty scent that cannot be bought. Carrots sown in April are fully mature now, while those sown in June are delicious as young roots that can stay in place all winter.**

Carrots can be picked now or left in the ground through winter

PHOTOS: JASON INGRAM

## Don't forget

- ☐ **Remove dead plant material from ponds to keep the water fresh**
- ☐ **Trim hedges to get them crisp and neat, ready for next spring's growth**
- ☐ **Cut dahlias for a bright indoor display in a vase**
- ☐ **Plant autumn onion sets direct in the soil, spacing the bulbs 10-15cm apart**

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/sep-jobs** for more seasonal tasks and advice

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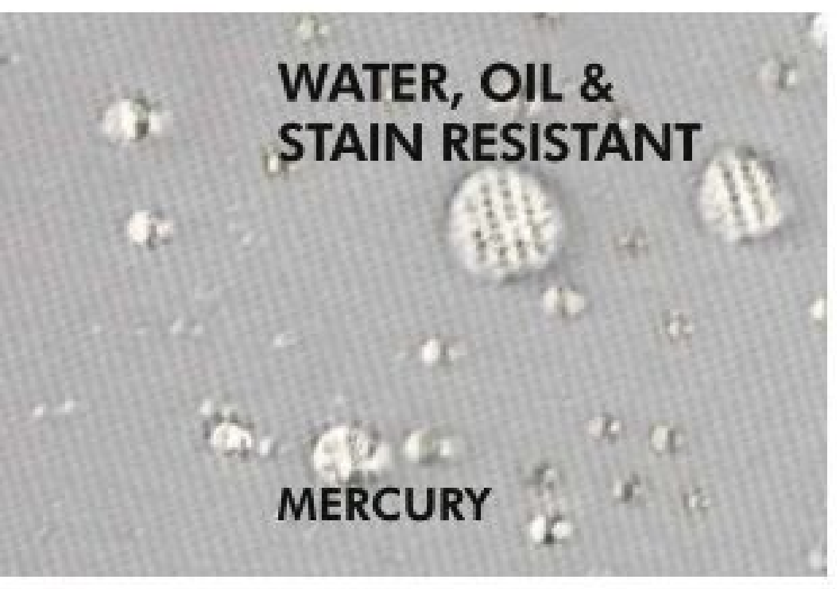

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## Don't forget

☐ Plant perennials now, so they can establish their roots before winter

☐ Start planting daffodils, avoiding waterlogged soil or deep shade

☐ Support late-flowering perennials before they start to flop over

☐ Remove diseased leaves from roses, and from the ground beneath them, to avoid reinfection

☐ Plant out biennials such as sweet Williams and wallflowers in their final locations for next year

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/more-flowers** for more deadheading tips

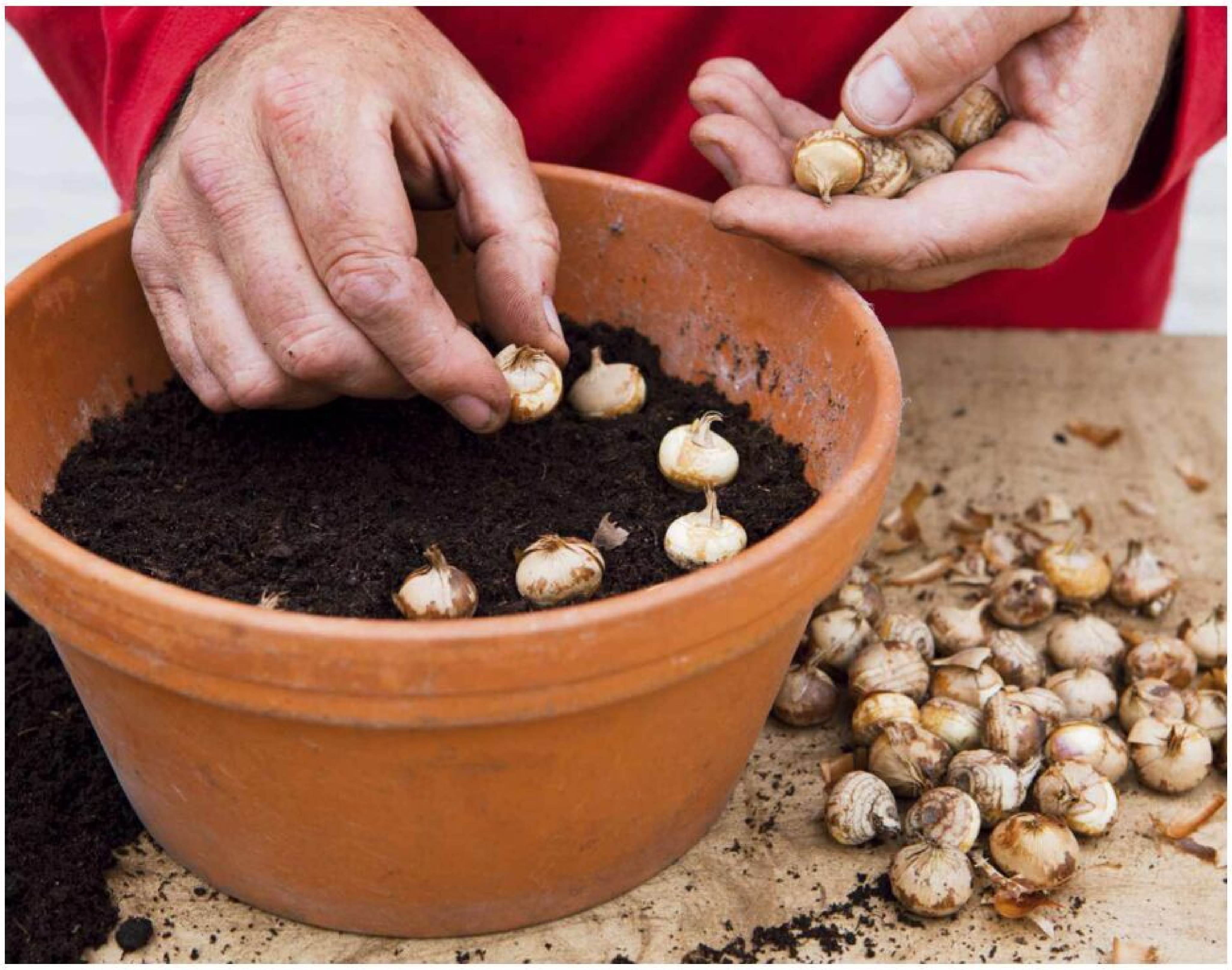
Deadhead calendula to keep it flowering up to the first frosts

## Tidy up calendula for autumn flowers

Continue deadheading pot marigolds to keep the bright orange and yellow flowers going well into autumn.

Snip the flowers off with scissors or pinch them out with your fingers, but avoid tugging at the plant. Throw the debris on the compost heap.

Calendula are annuals but the seeds are hardy, so if you want them to grow in the same spot next year, leave a few flowers to go to seed and they'll sow themselves.



A generous quantity of crocus corms gives maximum effect in pots, but leave 1-2cm between them

# Plant crocus corms in pots

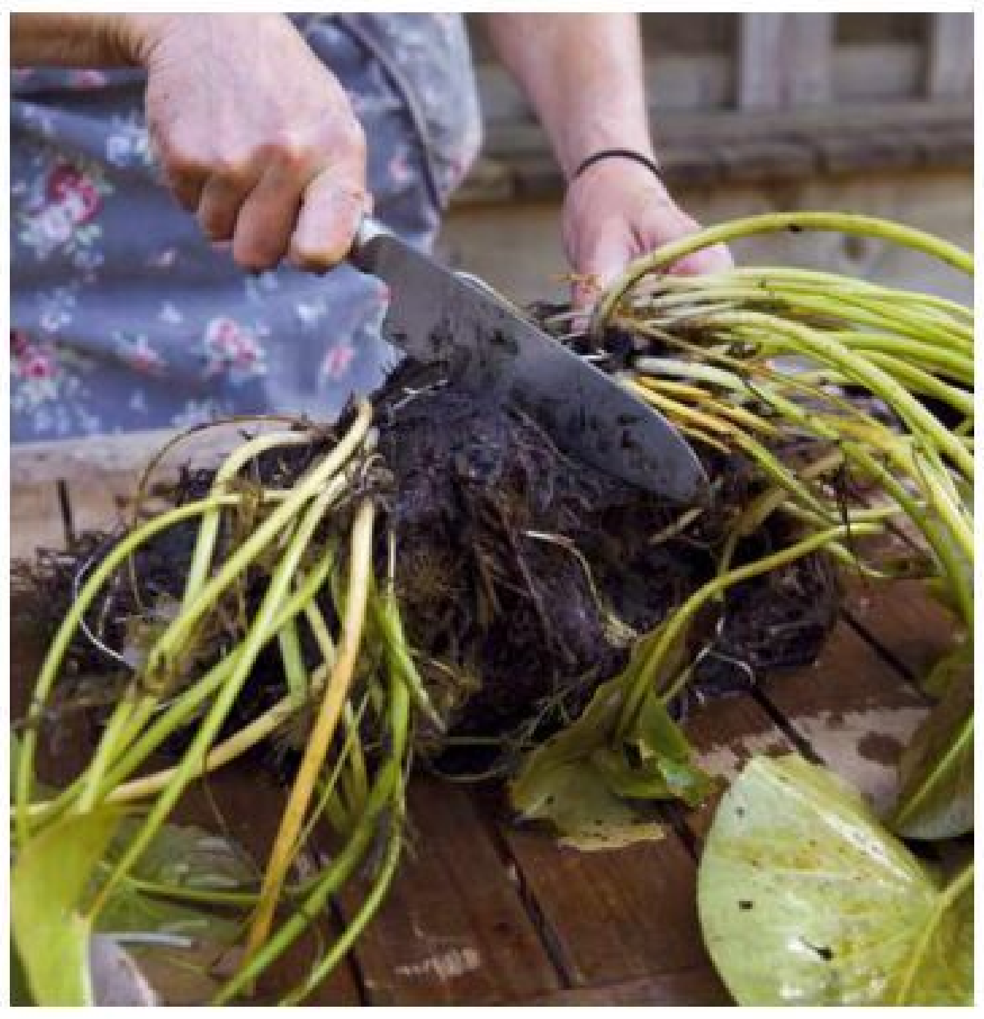
Plant up pots of crocus corms now to give them time to develop strong root systems before spring. Choose a wide, shallow pot like this alpine pan and part-fill it with peat-free potting compost. Pots made of clay help with drainage, because the surface is porous to water.

Use plenty of corms for maximum impact, but space them so that they don't touch. Also make sure they are planted with the point facing up. Cover with 6-8cm of compost, firm down, water and finally mulch with grit. Place in a sheltered spot outside.

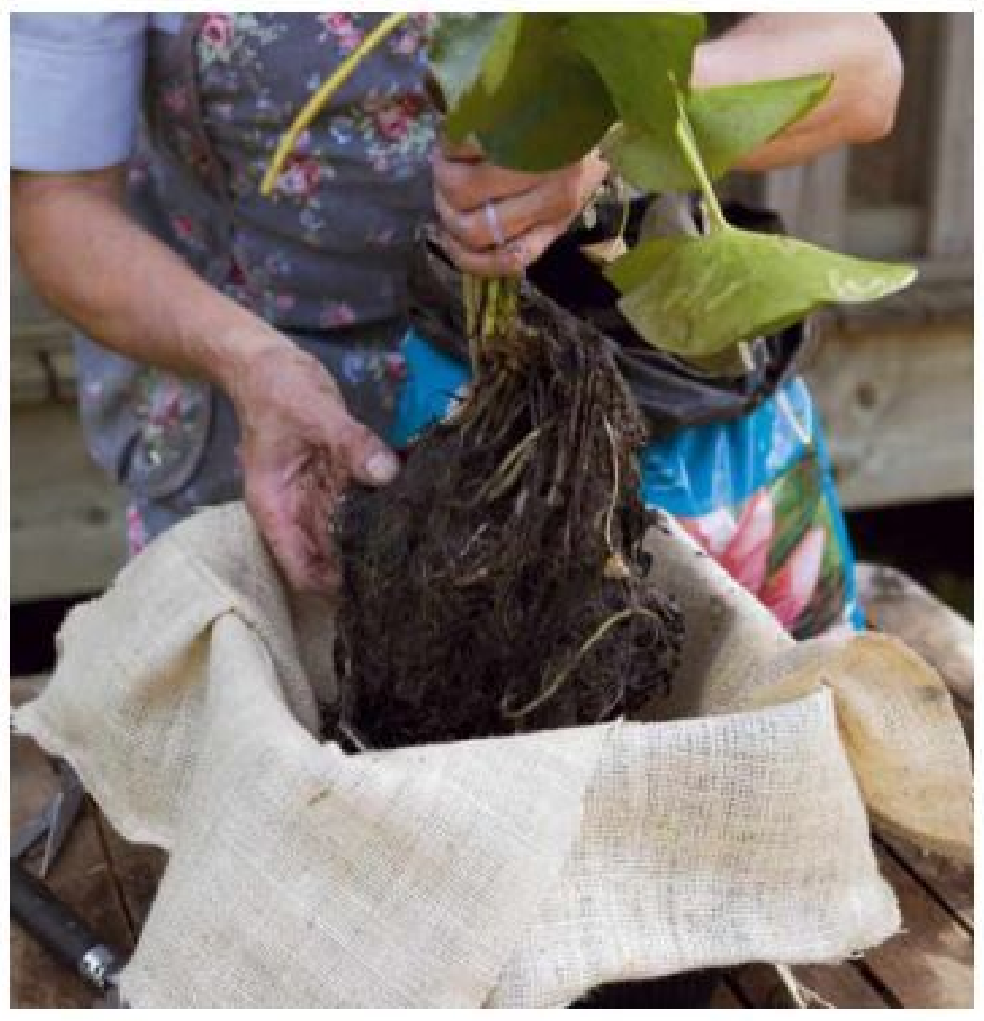
## STEP BY STEP

## Divide water lilies

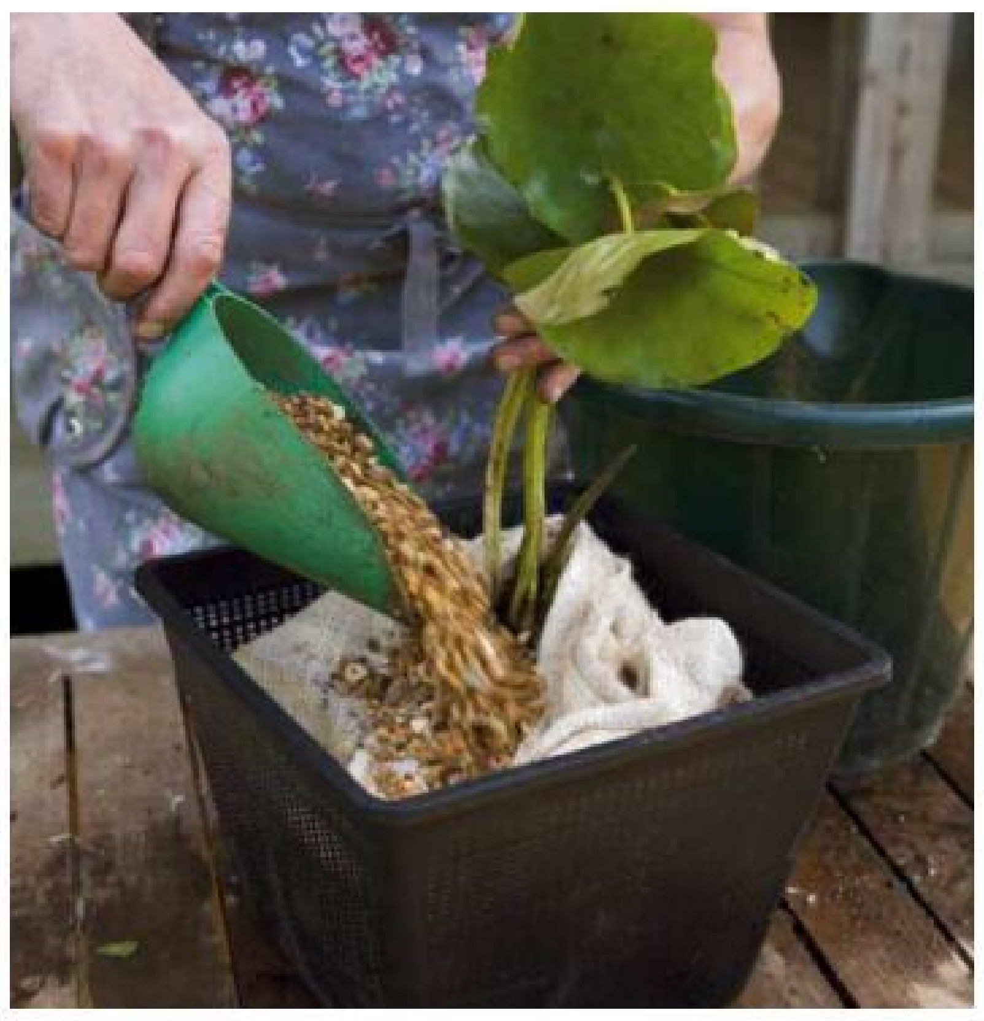
**Rejuvenate water lilies in aquatic baskets by dividing their roots and re-planting them. Use low-nutrient compost to reduce the risk of more algae growing in the pond. When finished, place the baskets back into shallow water, until the plants are producing new leaves, then gradually increase the depth.**



**1** LIFT the plant out of the pond gently. Use a kitchen knife to cut the clump into sections, each of which should have a few shoots.



**2** LINE a mesh basket with a loose-weaved fabric such as hessian. Pot a clump using aquatic compost, pressing it down firmly.



**3** FOLD the hessian over the top and fix it all in place with a thick layer of gravel. Soak the basket before slowly lowering it back in.

WORDS: GREG LOADES; ROSIE YEAOMANS. PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE

**20 MINUTES TO SPARE**

Make sure potted camellias and rhododendrons have a good soak in dry spells, otherwise they may not develop many strong flower buds for next year. Ideally use rainwater saved in a butt but if the plant is very dry, any water is better than none at all.

## Liven up border edges with pinks

Plant repeat-flowering pinks now for a pretty flush of flowers in the front of your border this autumn. They will perform best in free-draining soil with plenty of sun.

Soak the plants in their pots before planting. Make the planting hole a little way back from the edge of the border to allow for flowers to spread forwards without covering the grass.

Firm the rootball into place and then water again to settle it in.

**Pinks prefer an open position with lots of sun and free-draining soil**

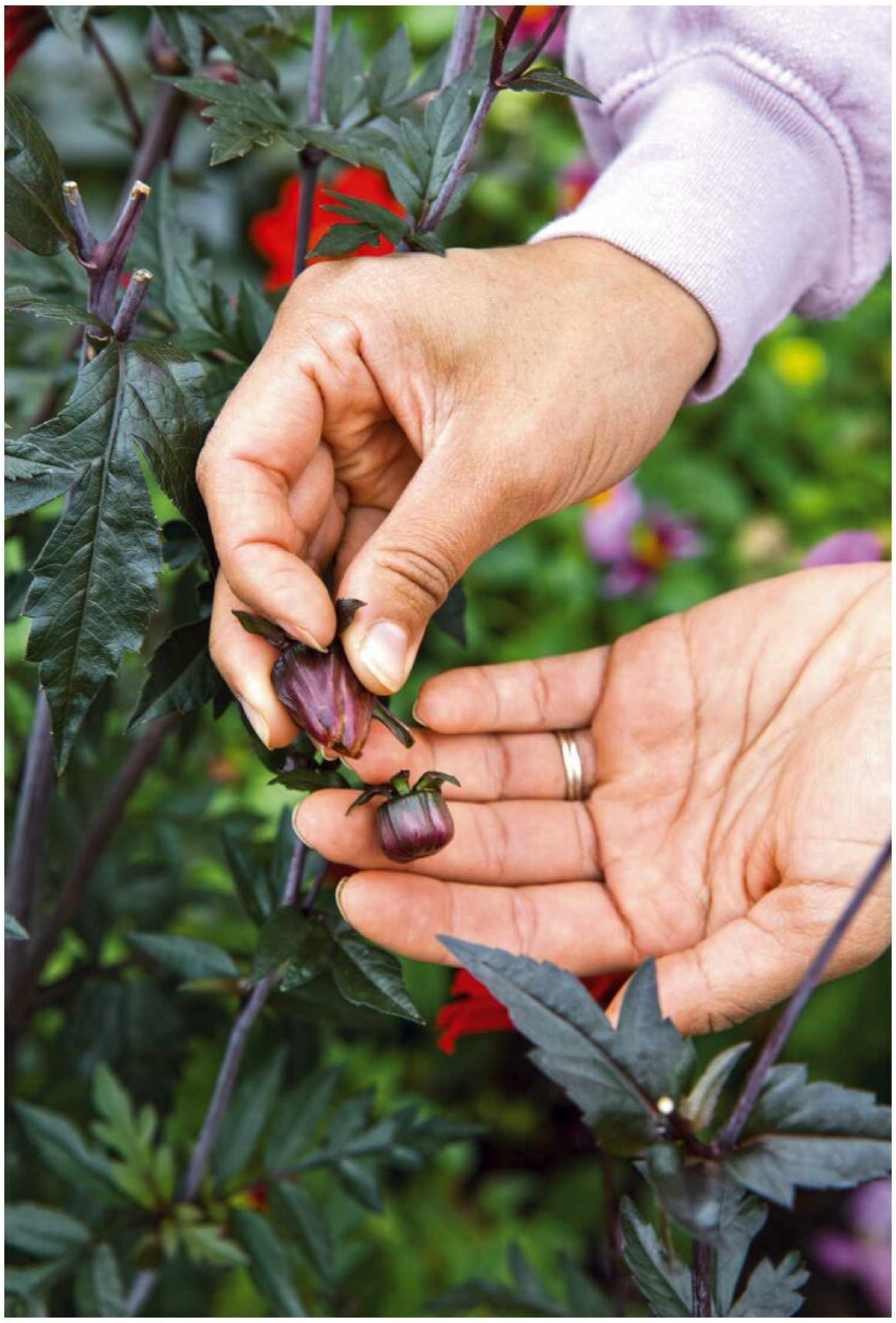
**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/sept-prop** for top plants to propagate this month

# Deadhead dahlias

Keep your dahlias flowering through late summer strongly by removing spent flowerheads. For the longest possible flowering you'll need to do this every few days.

It can be hard to tell the spent flowers and the emerging buds apart, so look carefully before removing anything. The flowers that have gone over are pointed at the tip, while the emerging buds have a flat face.

When removing dead flowers, cut the stem all the way back to a leaf joint, rather than just the flower.



**Spent dahlia flowers have a pointed shape, while new buds are flat**

## Keep watering autumn pots

September can be a hot month and plants lose even more moisture in windy weather, so check autumn pots regularly and water generously to stop them from drying out.

Keep the watering can low down over the plant to soak the roots and compost rather than the leaves. Water slowly to make sure the compost is soaked through, rather than running down the sides of the pot.

**Use the watering can low down, so that every drop goes into the pot**

**TOP TIP**

**Trim back growth on plants in hanging baskets that are getting messy or tangled up. Summer baskets can give lots of colour for at least another month, as long as you continue to feed and water them regularly.**

## Cut back lavender

Keep your lavender in good shape by cutting back the spent flowers and this year's foliage now. This gives the plant time to develop a thick, neat cover of new growth that will harden up enough to survive winter, and produce even more flowers next year.

Individual plants can be trimmed to shape using secateurs, but use shears for larger areas or hedges, cutting only the newest growth down by two thirds. Pick all the clippings out of the plants and from around the area, and put them on the compost heap.

**Cutting lavender back stops it becoming tall and leggy, but don't go into the old, brown wood because it won't grow back**

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE

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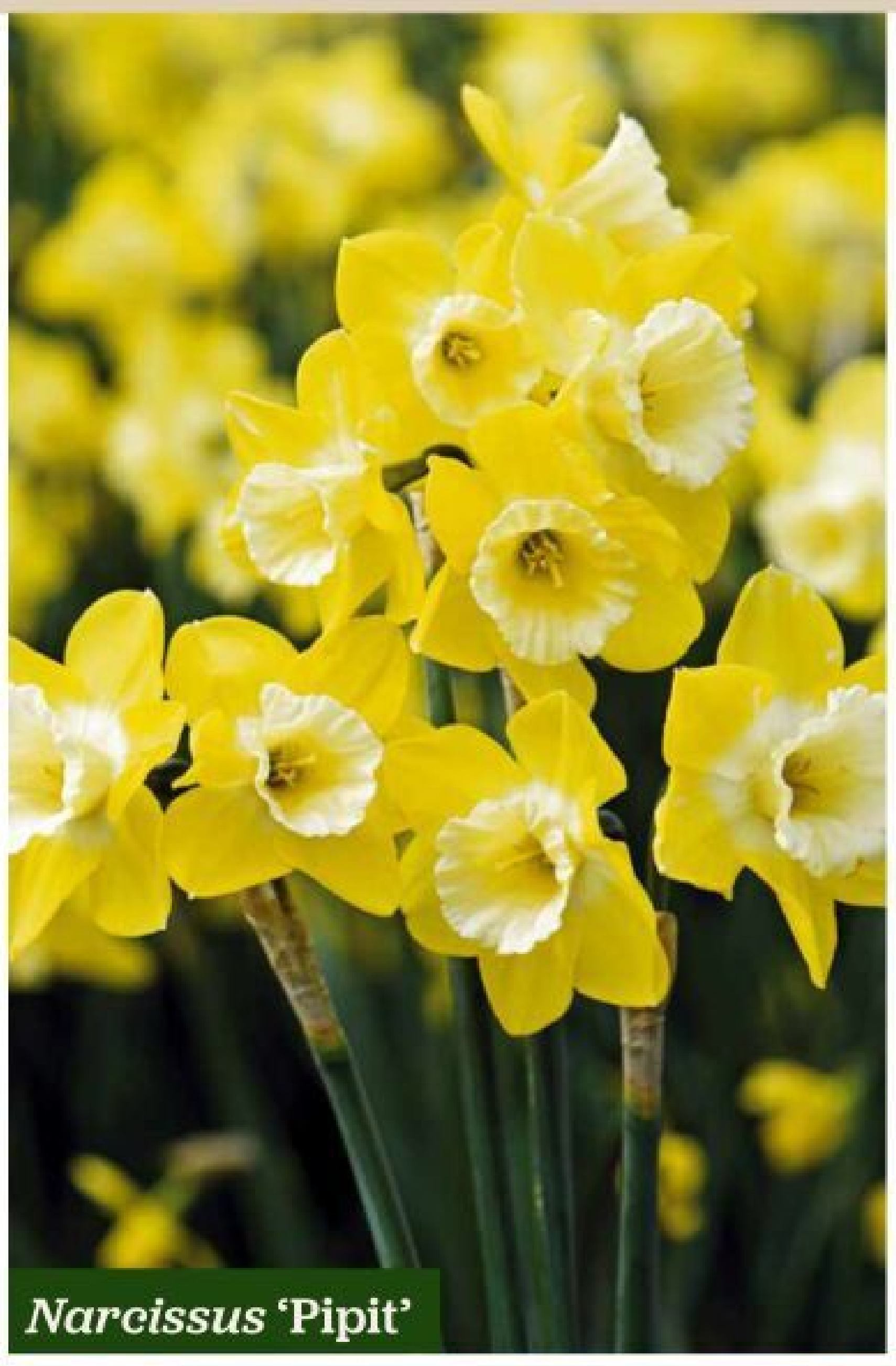
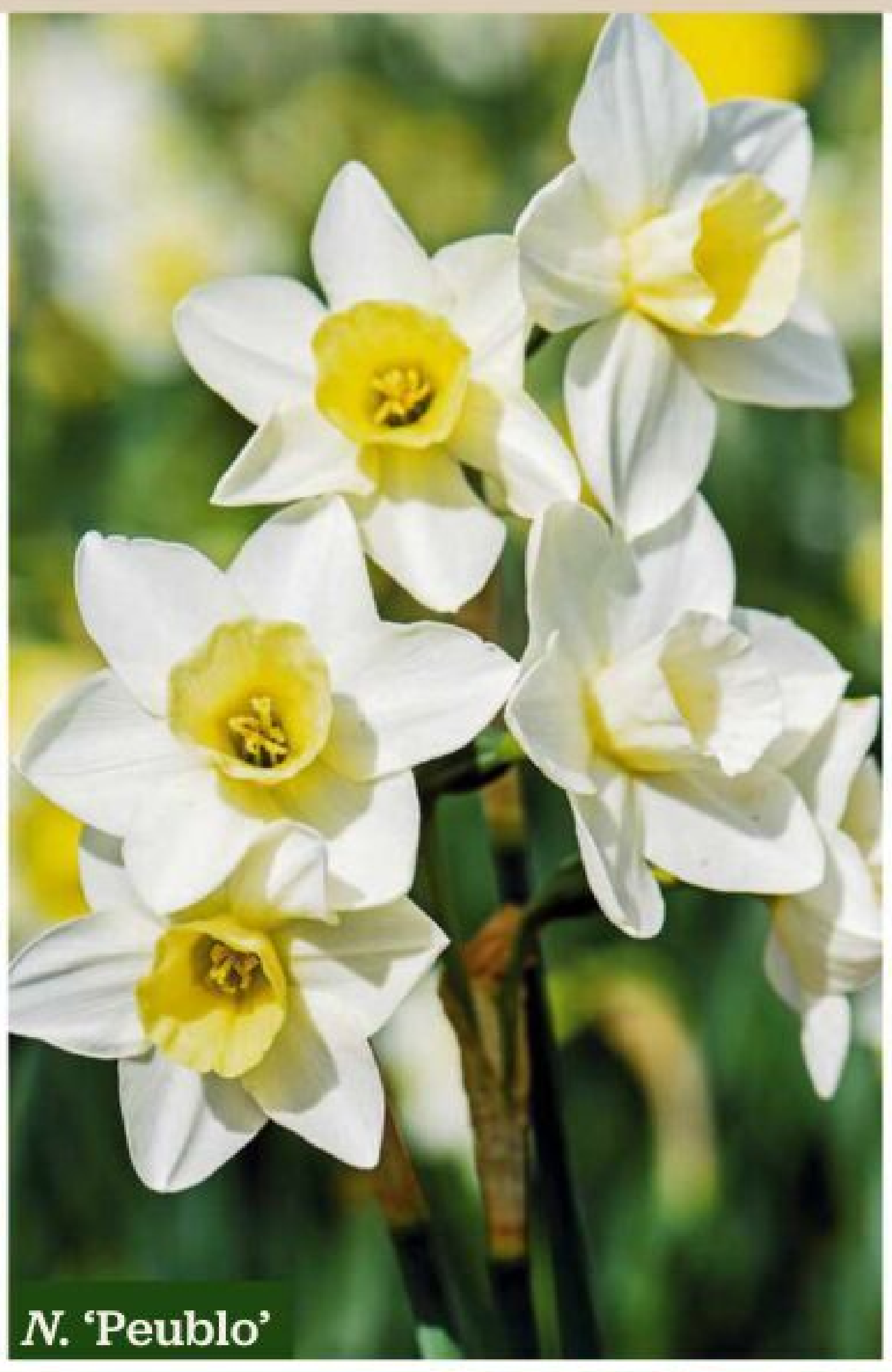
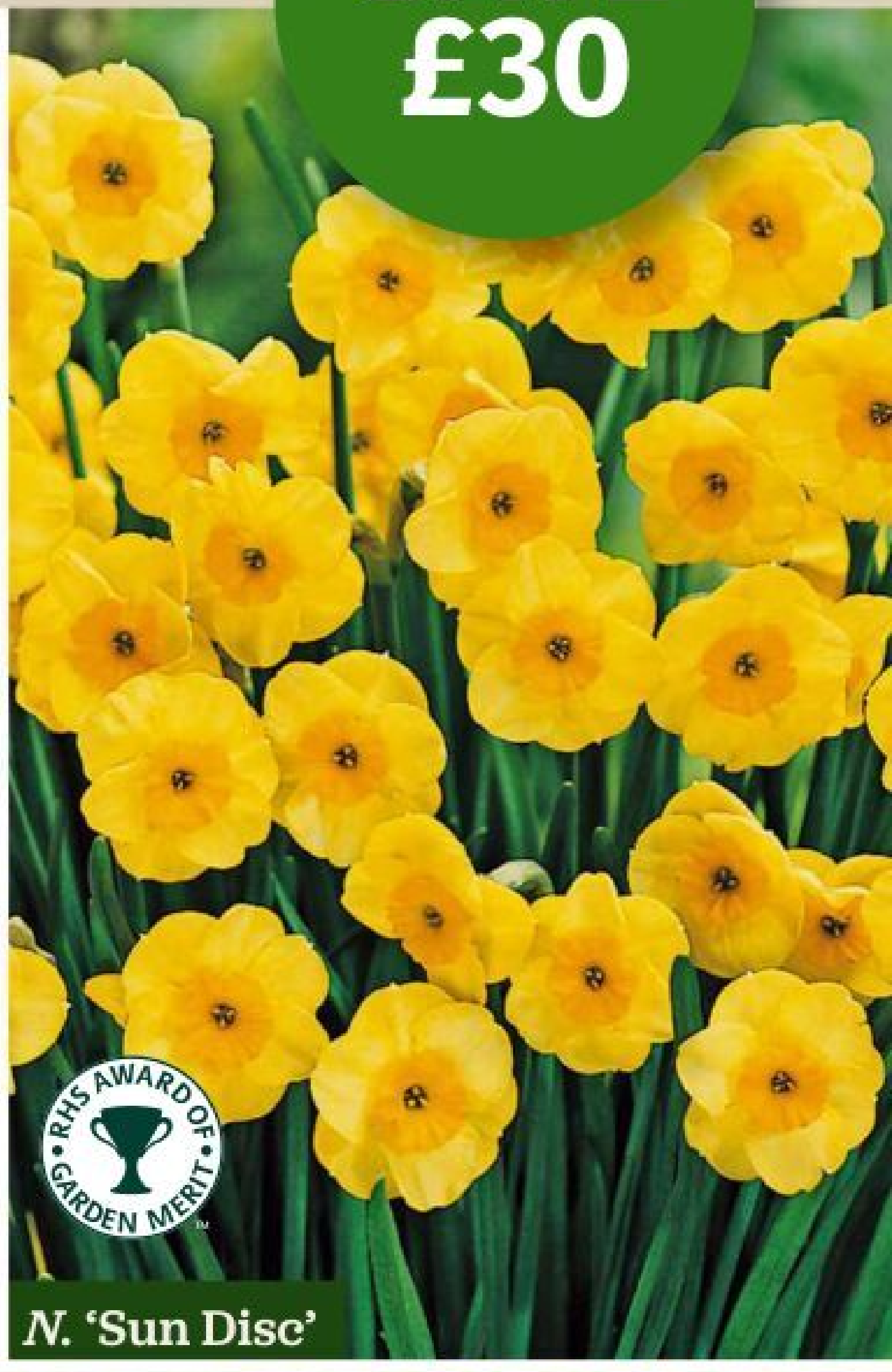
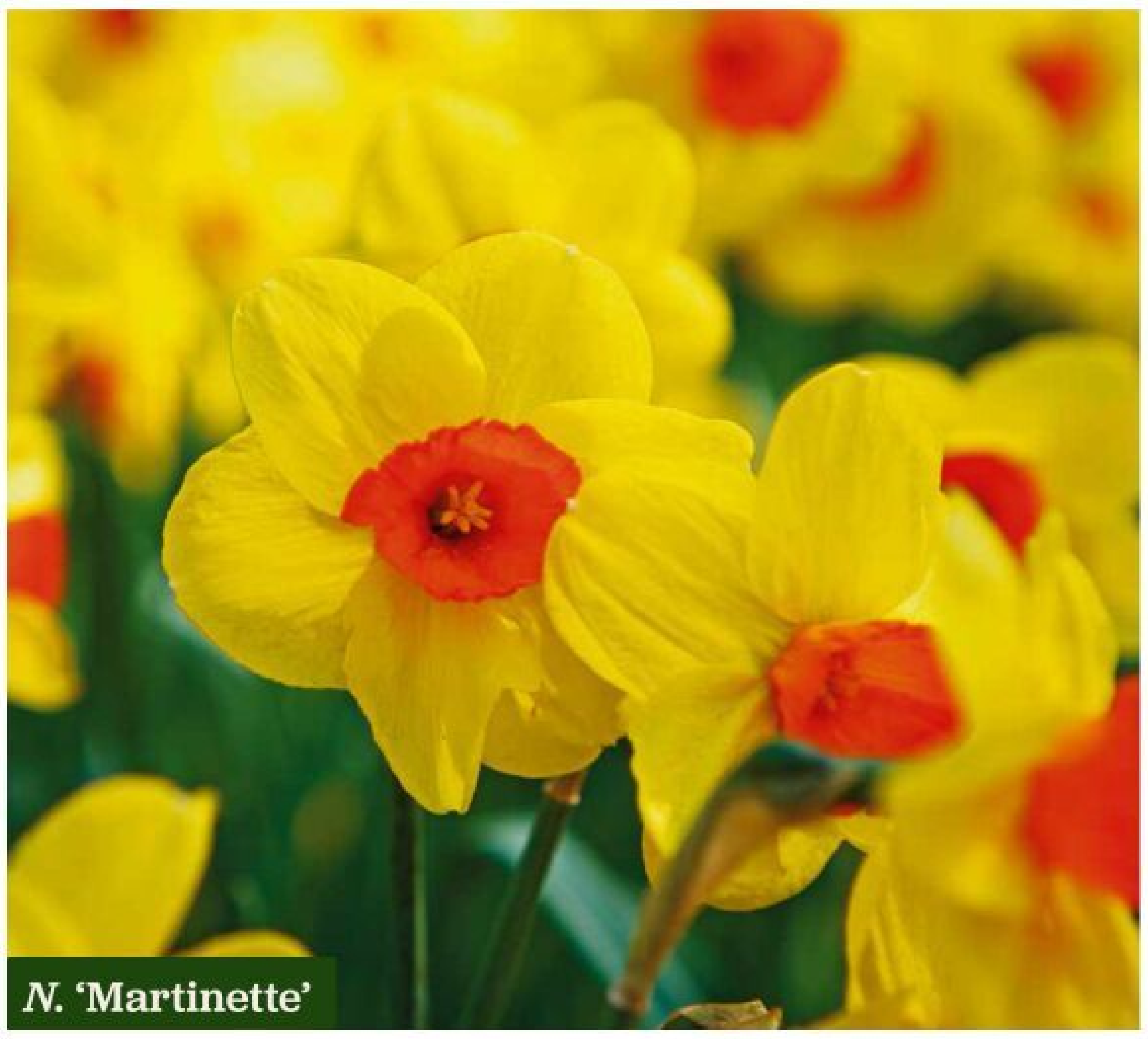
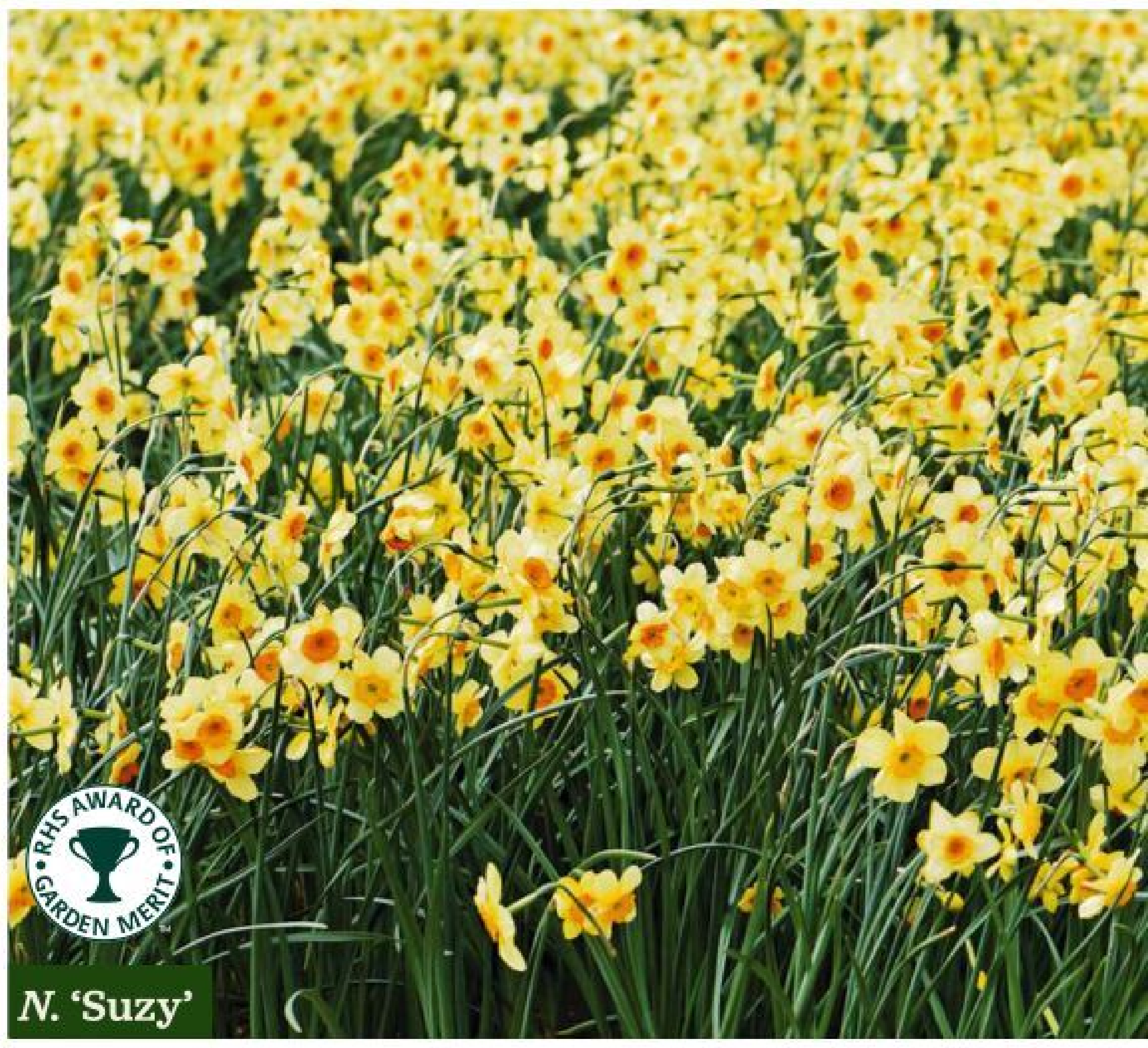

*Narcissus* 'Pipit'


*N.* 'Peublo'


*N.* 'Sun Disc'


*N.* 'Martinette'


*N.* 'Suzy'

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**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/greenhouse** for more on growing in a greenhouse

## Don't forget

- ☐ Place tender plants under cover before the nights start to get cold
- ☐ Harvest aubergines, chillies, grapes, melons and tomatoes
- ☐ Reduce watering and feeding your plants at the end of the month as growth slows
- ☐ Continue opening vents and doors on warm days to reduce humidity

## 10 MINUTES TO SPARE

Dig up and pot up herbs such as chives, lemon balm, mint and parsley for a fresh greenhouse supply in winter. Pot them up using an equal parts mix of soil-based and peat-free multi-purpose compost, and they'll produce more fresh shoots.

Use mild soap and water to clean greenhouse windows

## Clean greenhouse glazing

Make sure you get maximum light into the greenhouse by cleaning the glass panes of all the dust, debris and algae that may have built up through the summer. Use warm soap and water to lift off the grime, inside and out.

There is bound to be more cleaning to do once all the leaves have dropped in autumn, but getting the maximum amount of light levels are crucial now for ripening plants and extending the cropping season in the greenhouse.

## Plant winter lettuce now

Plant up containers with young lettuce plants to grow a crop for winter pickings. Fill a large pot with multi-purpose peat-free compost. Firm the surface, then use a dibber to make holes and firm in each plant well. Soak the pot and keep it well watered for the next few weeks.

There is still time to sow more for winter: 'Winter Density', a good cos type, and 'Valdor', a butterhead, are reliable winter crops.

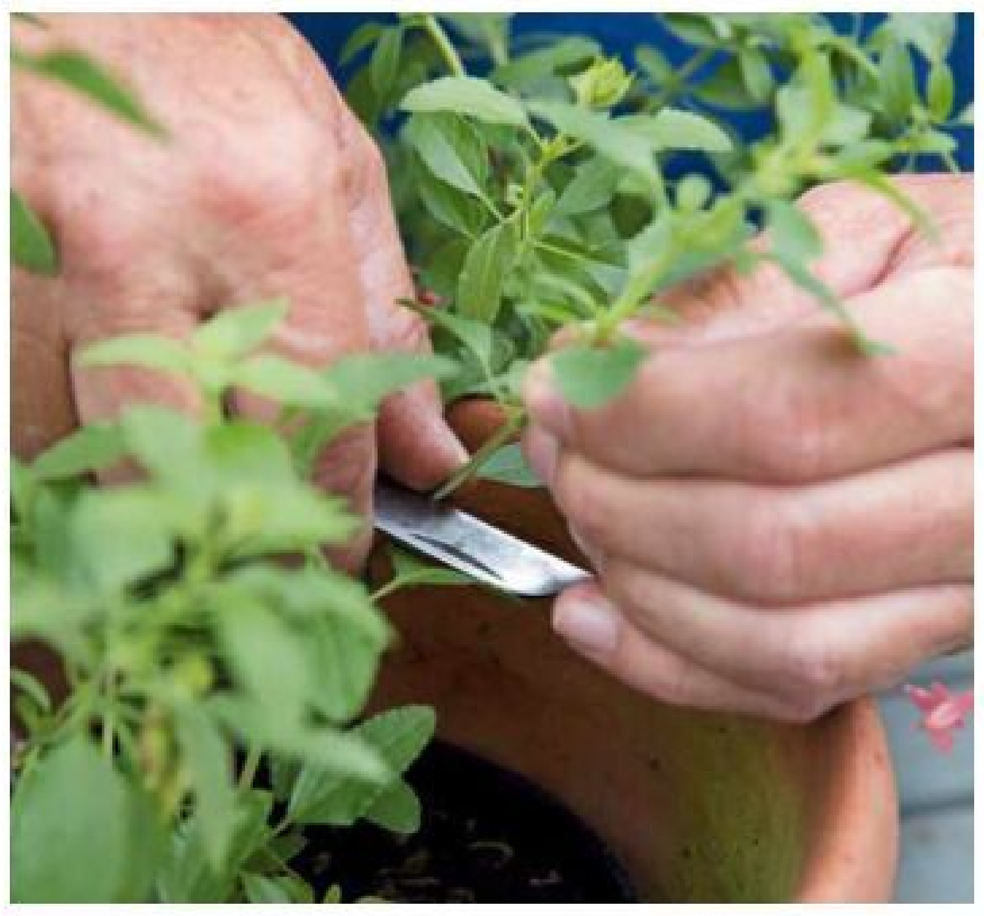
Use a dibber to make 15cm-deep holes for your lettuce seedlings

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/winter-lettuce** for more on growing winter lettuce

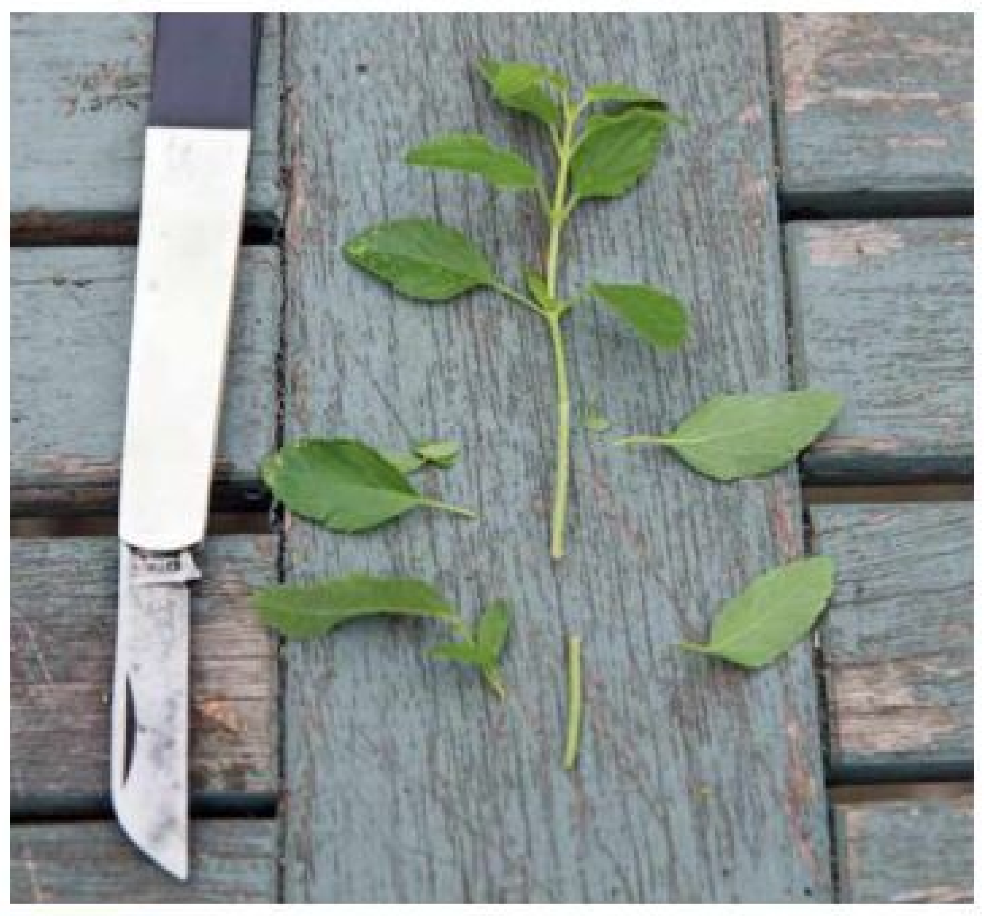
## STEP BY STEP Take salvia cuttings

**Take cuttings of your less-hardy shrubby salvias just in case you lose plants this winter. *Salvia greggii* cultivars are all vulnerable to damage in freezing weather, but their cuttings will overwinter well in the greenhouse.**

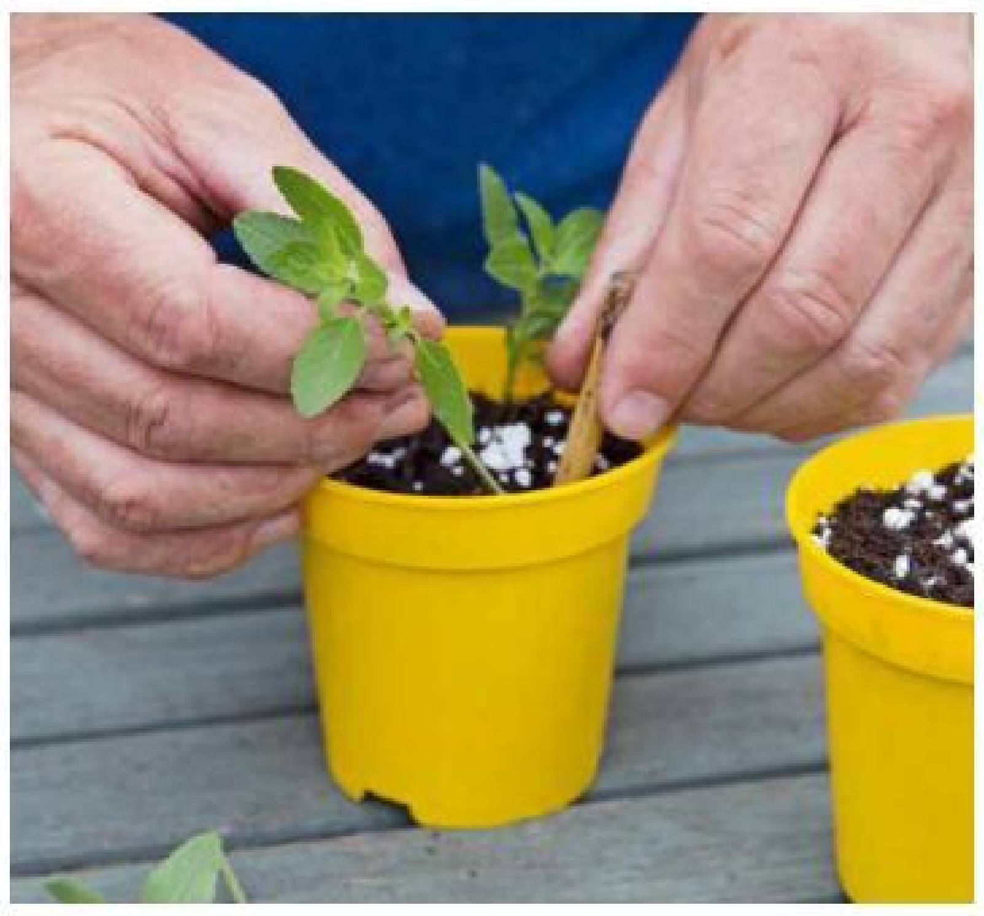
**Using a free-draining propagation compost improved with perlite or grit, these will root within a few weeks. Wait until next spring to pot them up when they will grow away in new compost.**



1 CHOOSE non-flowering shoots for your cuttings. Make cuts just above a bud to encourage regrowth on the parent plants.



2 TRIM the cutting just above a leaf joint and remove the lower leaves. Leave at least two pairs of leaves at the top.



3 INSERT the cuttings around the edge of a pot. Firm them in with a dibber, then water and place in a covered propagator or plastic bag.

WORDS: GREG LOADES; ROSIE YEAOMANS.
PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS; NEIL HEPWORTH

# Save poppy seed for next year

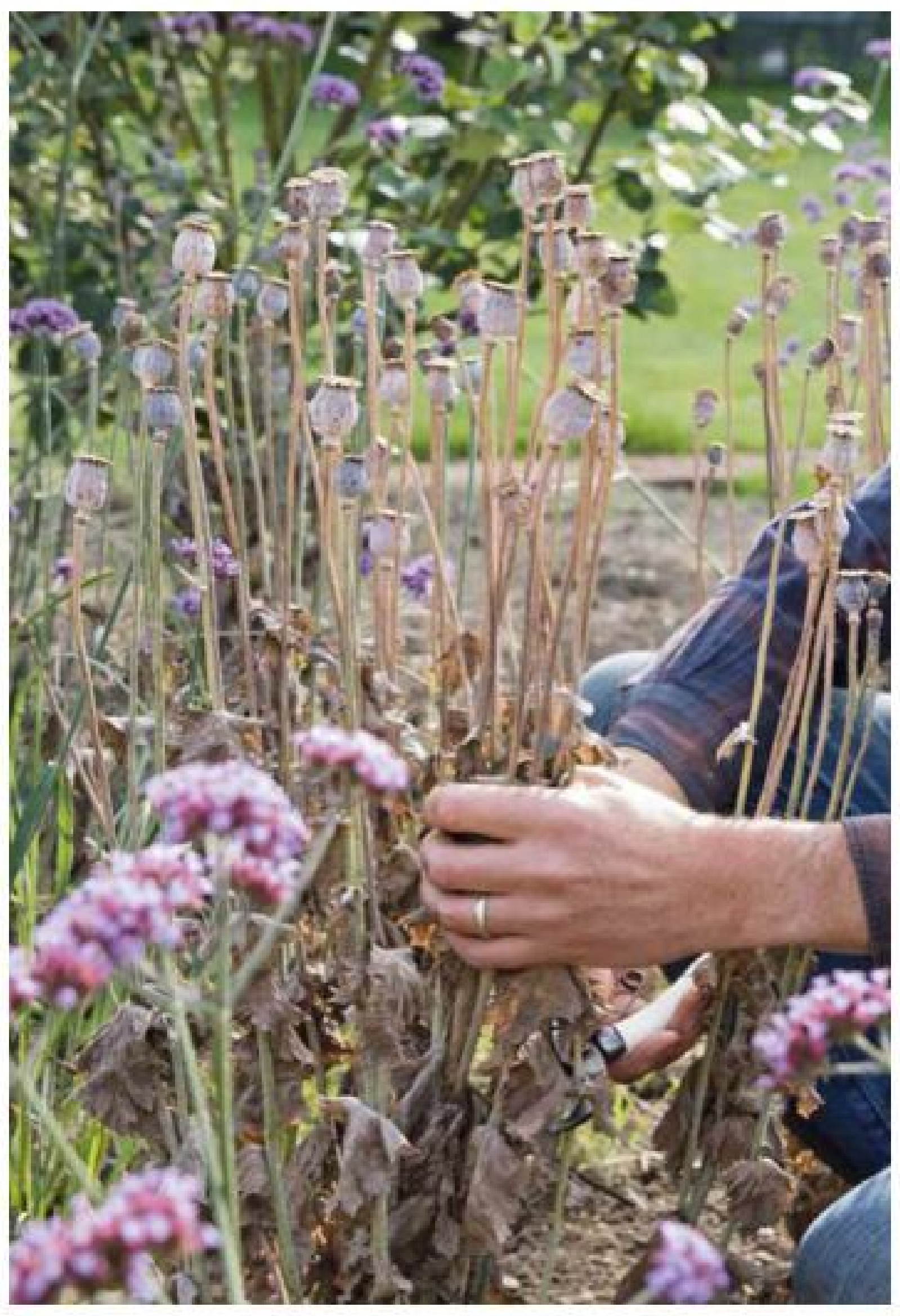
Collect opium poppy seed to control the position of this pretty annual, for flowers next summer. Sow them where you'd like them to grow next year, rather than leaving them to randomly drop seed and turn up unexpectedly in your border. Opium poppies grow best with full sun in free-draining soils, so they make an ideal plant for a gravel garden or to add colour to a sunny herbaceous border.

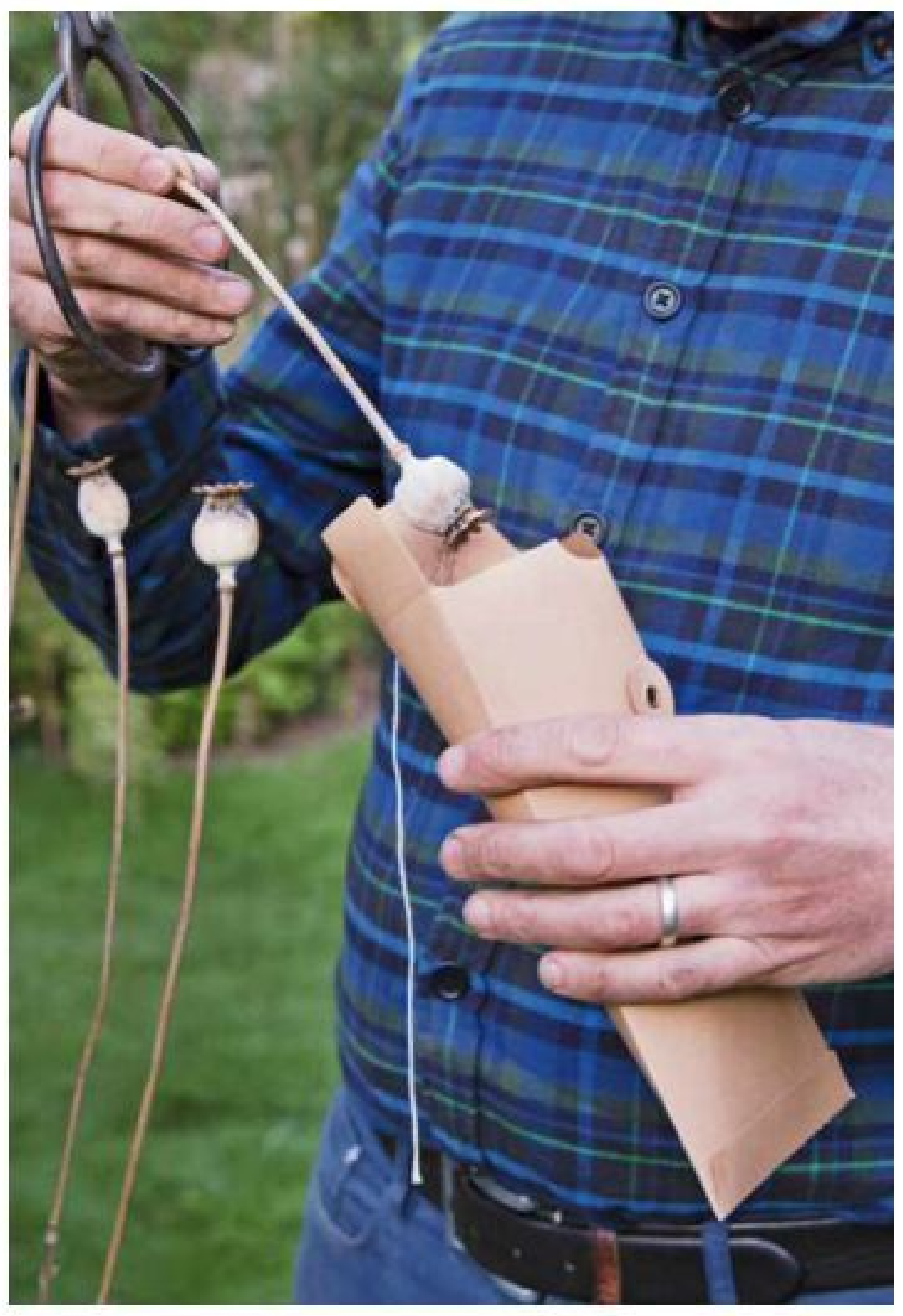
Companies sell the seed of specific varieties of *Papaver somniferum*, if you want to be sure of the right colour-effect. If your style is more wild or cottage-garden, just let them cross-pollinate freely and you'll get colours ranging from white and mauve to reds, pinks and even some with dark purple tones.

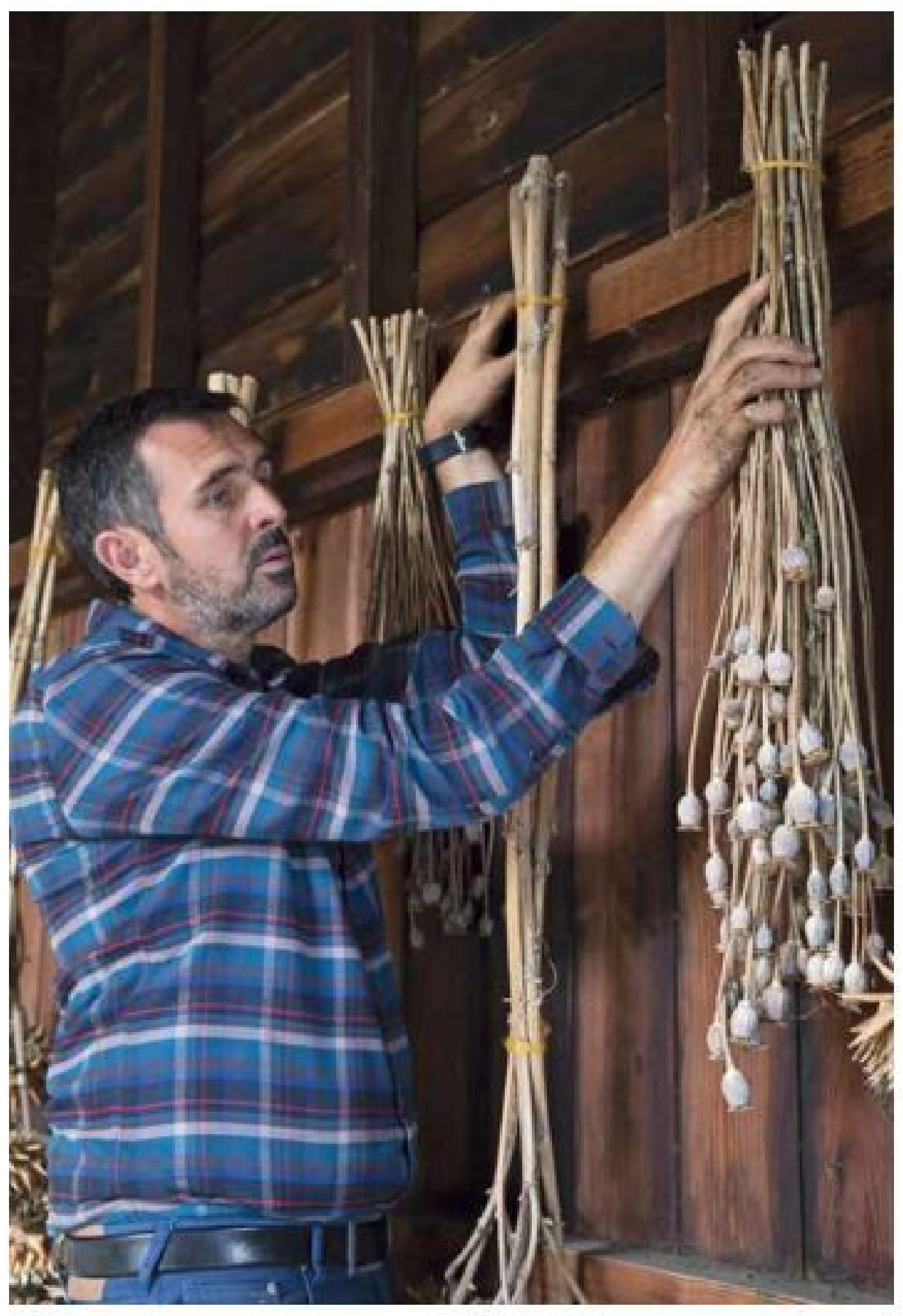
Collecting your own seed saves some money, though, and the end of the growing season is the perfect time to collect and store it. If you sow seed this autumn you'll get earlier flowers next year. Sow some more in the spring for flowers that follow on from the earliest ones.

**Save seed on a dry day without strong wind, after the morning dew has burned off**

## STEP BY STEP Gather and sow poppy seeds


**1** LOOK for stems with classic poppy seedheads that have dried completely on the plant and cut them off, being careful that the seeds don't fall out.


**2** LOWER the seed heads into a paper envelope and shake. Alternatively, shake the seeds onto paper and then pour them into the envelope. Store somewhere dry.


**3** DRY the empty seedheads – they make a great addition to flower arrangements. Tie stems in bunches and hang them in a place that's dry, airy and out of direct sun.

**4** SOW seeds straight into the border this autumn, or next spring. Loosen the soil surface with a rake, then either broadcast the seed or sow in short lines.

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE

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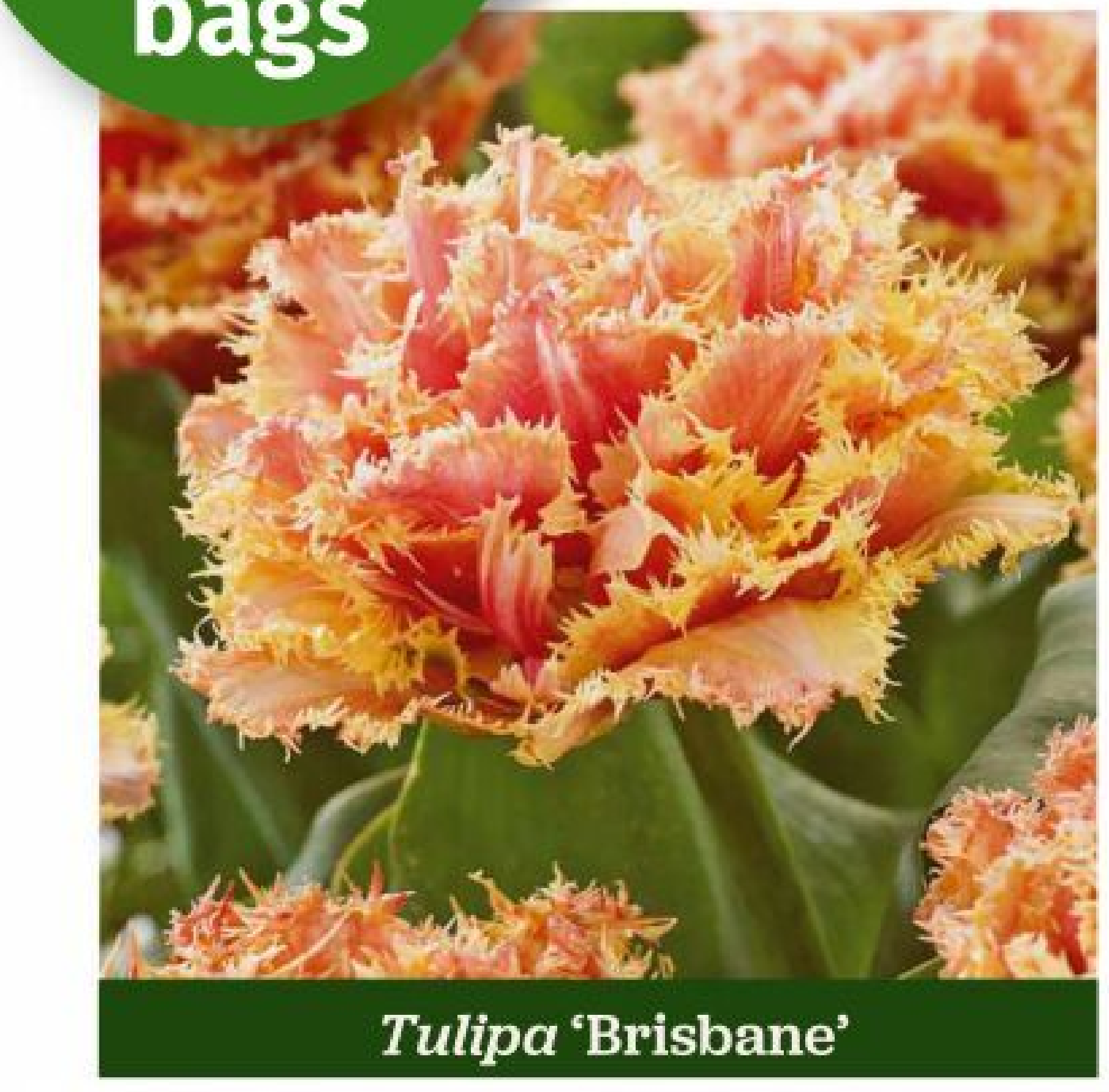
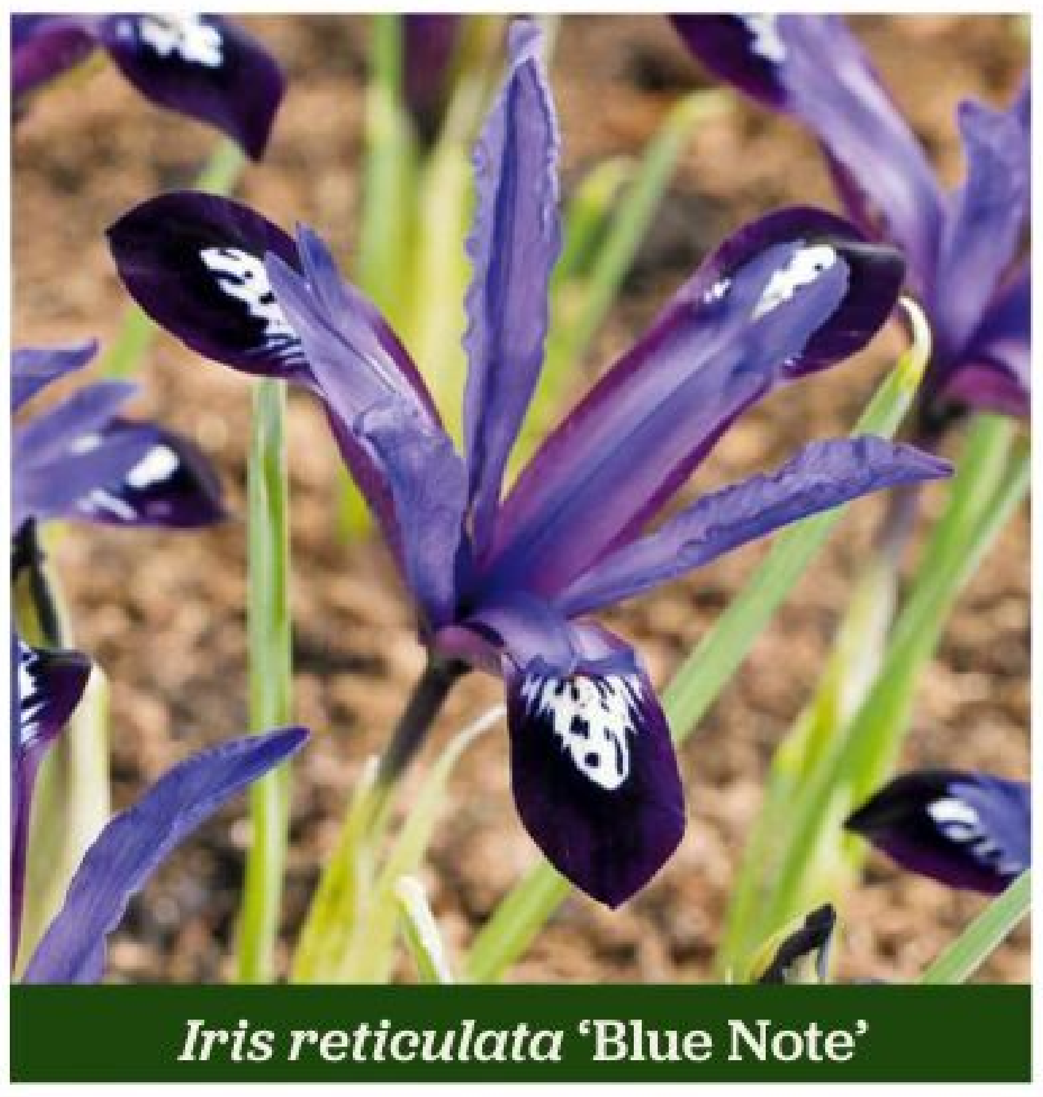
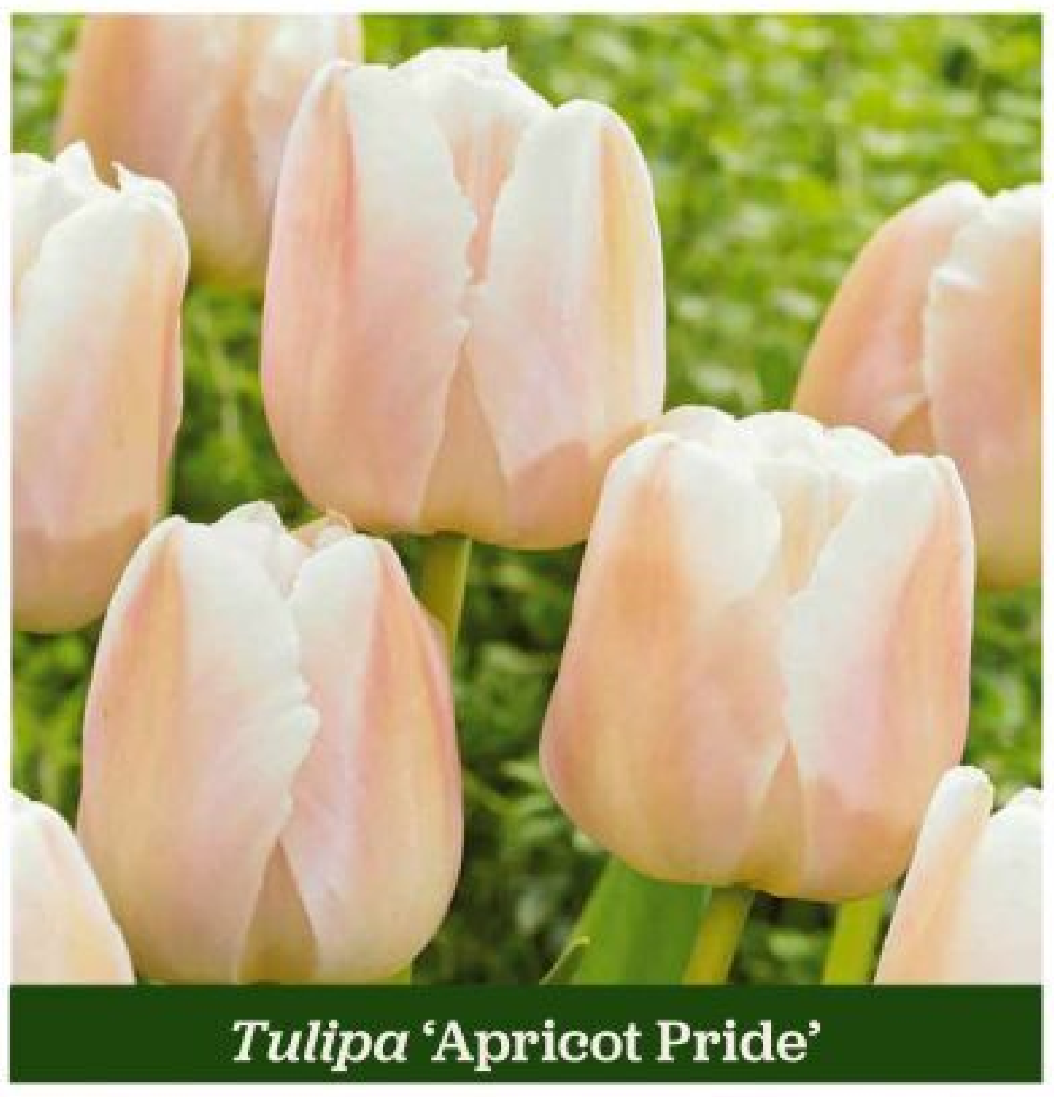


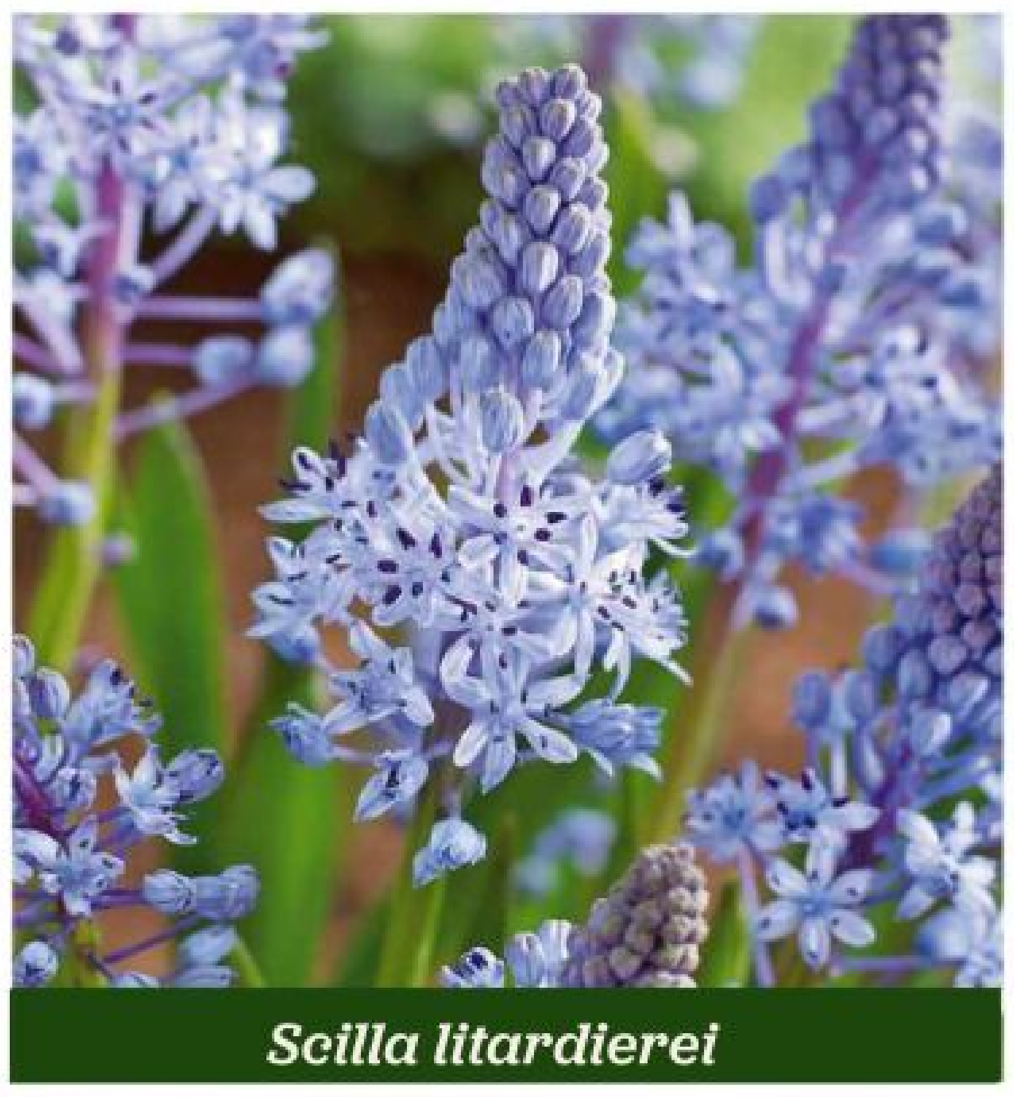
*Tulipa* 'Brisbane'



*Iris reticulata* 'Blue Note'



*Tulipa* 'Apricot Pride'



*Scilla litardierei*

*Narcissus* 'Dinnerplate'

*Fritillaria imperialis* 'Orange Beauty'

*Crocus chrysanthus* 'Herald'

*Tulipa humilis* 'Tête-à-Tête'

*Narcissus* 'Cosmopolitan'

■ ***Tulipa* 'Brisbane'**
Eye-catching ruffled double blooms. A long-lasting cut flower.
**Height x Spread** 45cm x 15cm
**Flowers** Apr-May
10 bulbs ~~£6.90~~ **£5.87**

■ ***Iris reticulata* 'Blue Note'**
Deepest blue-purple with a white blotch. Fragrant iris (unusual).
**H x S** 15cm x 10cm **F** Feb-Mar
20 bulbs ~~£4.60~~ **£3.91**

■ ***Tulipa* 'Apricot Pride'**
Tall and elegant, with large, goblet-shaped flowers.
**H x S** 45cm x 15cm **F** Apr-May
10 bulbs ~~£6.90~~ **£5.87**

■ ***Scilla litardierei***
Amethyst meadow squill. Looks feathery when fully open.
**H x S** 15cm x 10cm **F** Apr-Jun
20 bulbs ~~£4.80~~ **£4.08**

■ ***Narcissus* 'Dinnerplate'**
Large bright yellow centre with crimped and crinkled edges which fold back flat over the flower.
**H x S** 40cm x 15cm **F** Mar-Apr
5 bulbs from ~~£7.50~~ **£6.38**

■ ***Fritillaria imperialis* 'Orange Beauty'**
Unique burnt-orange flowers with copper-brown stems.
**H x S** 90cm x 25cm **F** Mar-Apr
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■ ***Crocus chrysanthus* 'Herald'**
The earliest crocus to come into flower. Unique colour contrast.
**H x S** 10cm x 5cm **F** Feb-Mar
10 bulbs ~~£5.90~~ **£5.02**

■ ***Tulipa humilis* 'Tête-à-Tête'**
Multi-headed, double blooms, with short and stocky stems.
**H x S** 20cm x 10cm **F** Mar-Apr
5 bulbs ~~£4.45~~ **£3.78**

■ ***Narcissus* 'Cosmopolitan'**
Up to four 6cm-wide flowers with delightful scent per stem.
**H x S** 40cm x 15cm **F** Mar-Apr
10 bulbs ~~£5.50~~ **£4.68**

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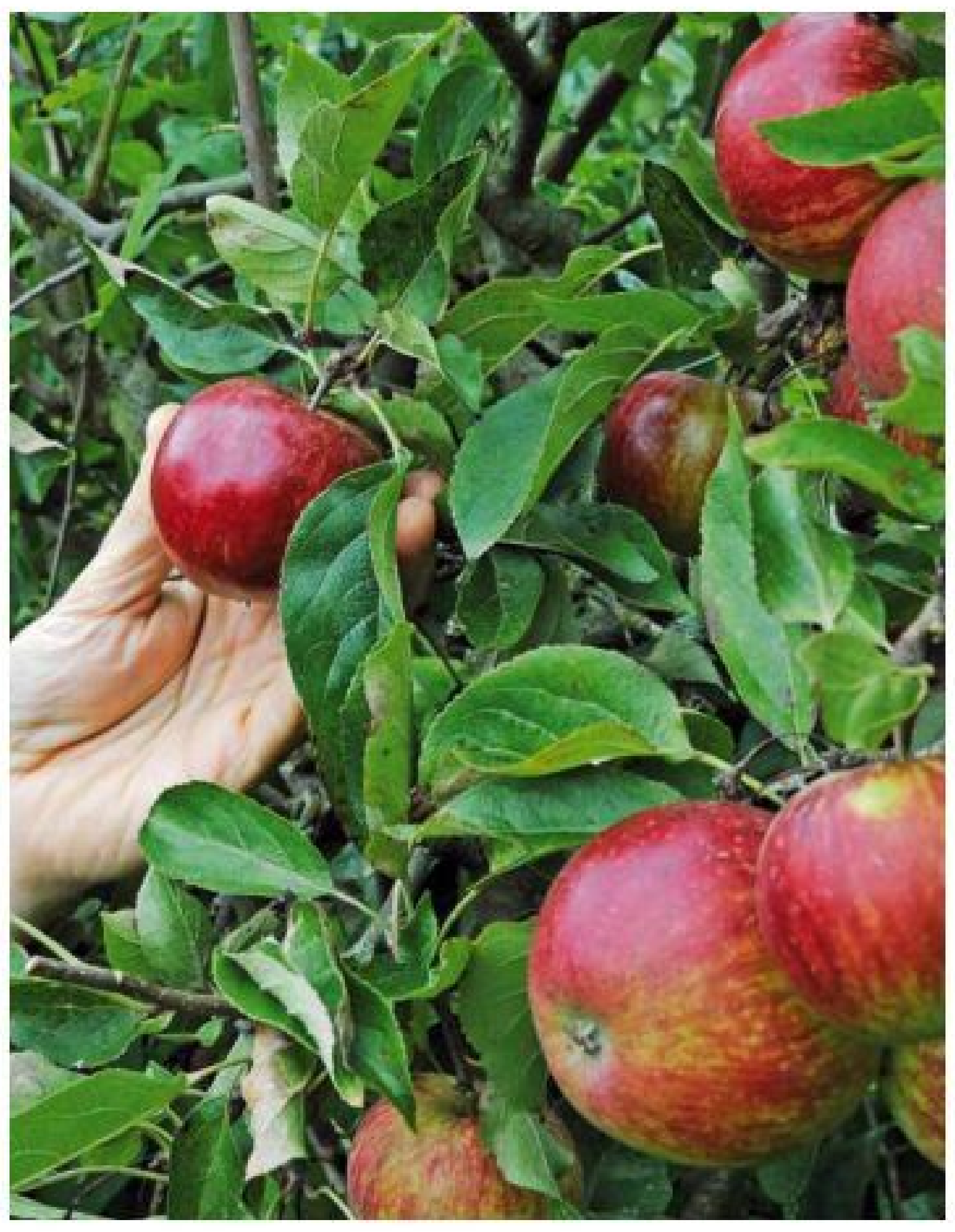
## 20 MINUTES TO SPARE

Sow an oriental salad mix in a pot outside for tasty leaves later in the autumn. Fill the pot with peat-free compost, sprinkle the seeds thinly on the surface and cover lightly with sieved compost. Then, taking care to avoid displacing the tiny seeds, water with a fine rose attachment. Don't let the surface dry out.



**Different varieties ripen at different times, from now up to late autumn**

## Give apples a ripeness test

Assess whether your apples are ready to pick by choosing one with good colour for the variety then twisting it slightly in your hand. If that's enough for the stalk to detach easily then it is ripe. You could also wait for some to drop off the tree and of course the absolute decider with dessert apples may be taking a bite to see if it tastes sweet enough to eat.

If you pick too early the fruit won't be sweet enough, so if they aren't ready, leave them to pick later.

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/september-crops** for our late-summer harvest guide

# Start harvesting winter squashes

Use sharp secateurs to cut squash fruits off the plant, leaving as long a stalk as possible on the fruit to improve its storage potential.

Winter squash are ripe when they lose their shiny sheen and instead take on a dull, dusty tone. The skin will feel firm to the touch, and the stalk at the top will also have thickened to become woody and difficult to cut.

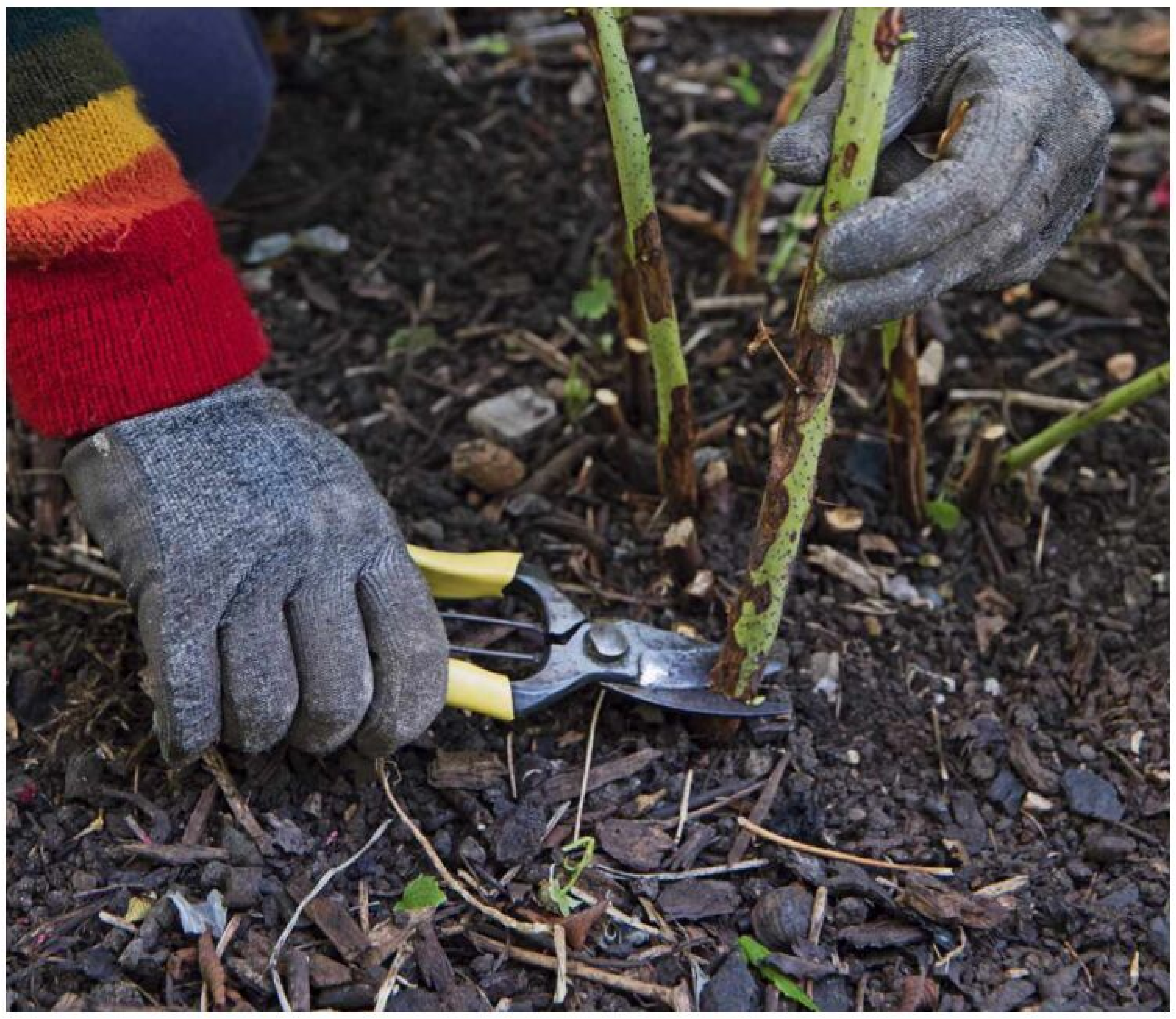
Fruits will be at different stages of readiness on any one plant, depending on when they emerged, so you may need to leave some in place and return later on – they are much tastier when ripened on the plant.

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/squash-info** for more on getting a bumper squash crop

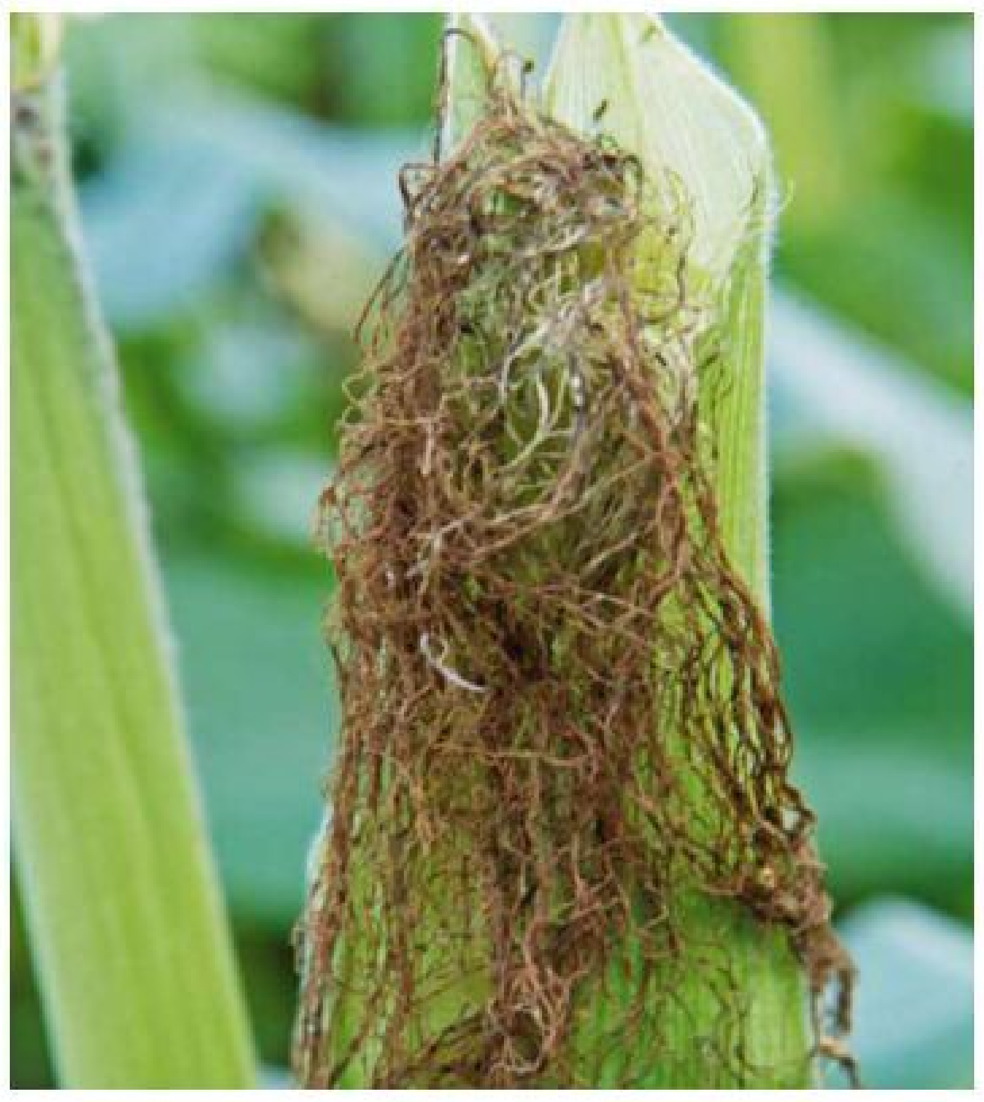
**The leaves of winter squashes die back as summer ends, exposing the fruits to sunlight and helping them to ripen**

## Cut back summer-fruiting raspberries

It's time to remove the spent canes of summer-fruiting raspberries, while leaving in place a number of the new stems that emerged this year, so that they can provide fruit next season. The old stems will tend to be browner in colour. Cut them out at the base, along with any straggly new growth. Leave in place the strongest of the new canes, which will need to be at least 10cm from each other, and tie them in to supports.



**Removing old growth lets in light and air for next year's fruiting canes**



**Beat squirrels to your harvest by monitoring for ripeness regularly**

## Check sweetcorn for picking

Test your sweetcorn for ripeness once they have reached a good size and you see that the tassels at the top have gone brown.

Gently peel back some of the outer covering. If ripe, the kernels should be very yellow and if you press your fingernail into one to pierce the skin, the sap should look milky. If the sap runs clear, cover it again and wait a few more days. They taste best when cooked straight after picking.

## Keep leeks well watered

**Ensure your leeks grow strongly by paying special attention to watering this month. If the soil dries out, plants get stressed and growth slows down.**

**Fill a watering can and pour it in a line along the row, a few centimetres away from the stems so that the roots extending out from the plant get plenty of water. You can repeat this along the other side of the row. Top up the mulch, too – this helps conserve moisture in the soil for longer.**

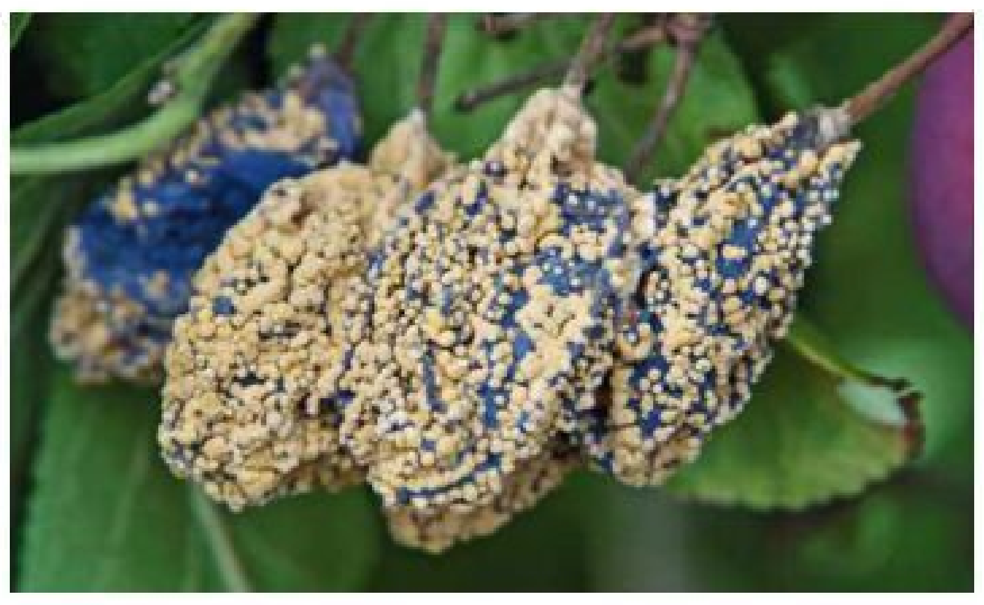
**Leeks have very shallow roots, so can dry out easily. Mulching keeps the sun off and helps to reduce the need for watering**

## Don't forget

- ☐ Order bare-root fruit trees and bushes for planting after summer
- ☐ Earth up brassica plants and firm the soil to keep them stable against wind
- ☐ Remove tiny, emerging squash fruits to focus energy on bigger ones
- ☐ Cut out old blackberry canes that have fruited and tie in new shoots

## Remove fruits with brown rot

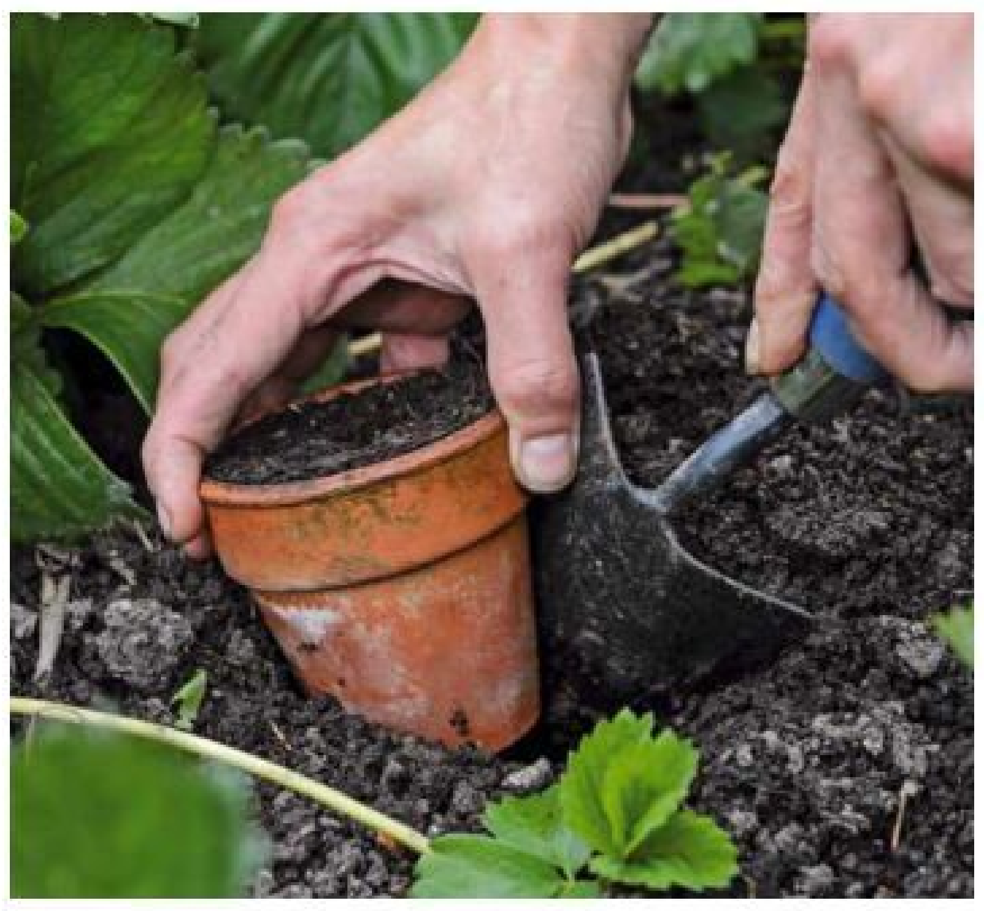
Check for brown rot forming on plums, cherries, peaches, pears and apples. This fungus infects through wounds made by birds, codling moth and wasps. Pick off the infected fruit when you see it and either put it in the council green waste bins for super-hot composting or bury it at least 30cm under ground. Don't let fruit rot on the tree, or on the ground below the tree. The fungus will overwinter there, and more spores will be released in spring.



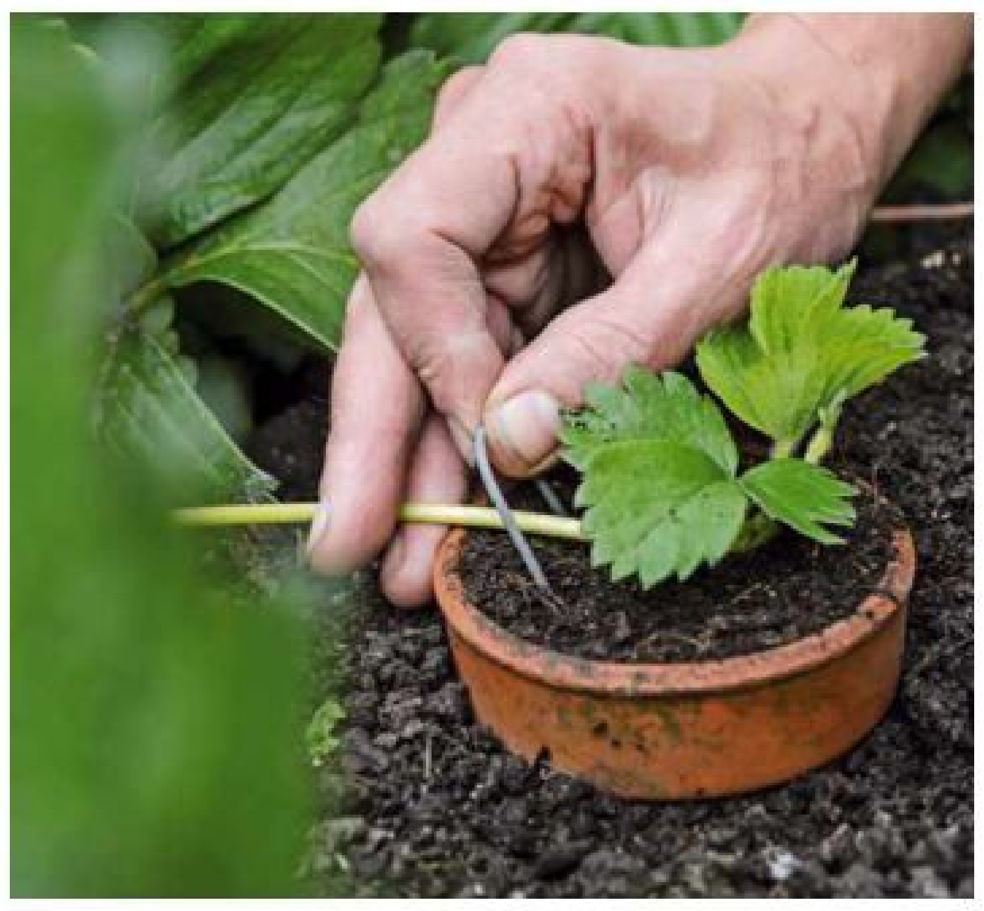
**Brown rot spreads quickly between fruits, especially in wet conditions**

## STEP BY STEP Make next year's strawberry plants

**If old strawberry bed is starting to become a little tired, you can get new plants for free. Strawberry plants propagate themselves naturally by sending runners out along the surface of the soil, which then develop roots and grow on as small plants, while receiving vital nutrients and water from the parent plant. Follow these steps in late summer for a new batch of vigorous baby plants next year.**



**1** FILL some small pots with peat-free compost or good garden soil and sink them into the ground, close to the main plant.



**2** SECURE a stem at a point where strong growth is showing, pegging it down with a length of thick wire.

**3** WATER it in and don't let it dry out in the sun. Once there are strong roots, the new plant can be removed from the main plant.

WORDS: GREG LOADES; ROSIE YEAOMANS.
PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS; JASON INGRAM; TIM SANDALL

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# Now's the time to tackle your smartphone

**Are you missing out on everything you could do with it? With these helpful books, there's nothing to fear about using smartphones.**

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Modern mobile phones – smartphones as they're called – can do so much more than just make phone calls.

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**Do the manufacturers do it on purpose?**

Sometimes it can seem like the manufacturers deliberately make them complicated – and how you do things is often hidden away. It might be easy once you know, but until you've been shown the easy way, it can drive you mad.

In fact only yesterday I was talking to someone whose Mum had got a new all-singing-all-dancing phone – but she couldn't work out how to answer a phone call on it! She's not daft – it's just that it's different from what she'd used before and the phone didn't come with a manual telling her what to do.

Whether you have similar problems or you're trying to do something slightly more advanced, the thing is, it can be easy to use them... once you know how. But until you've been shown, it can be like talking a different language.

That's why we've published these books: *iPhones One Step at a Time*, *Android Smartphones One Step at a Time* and *Doro Smartphones One Step at a Time.*

**Plain English... and that's not all**

They explain how to use the phone, in plain simple language with pictures of the screen showing you exactly where to tap or slide your fingers. No jargon!

**What's covered?**

I can't list it all here. But amongst other things, you'll discover:

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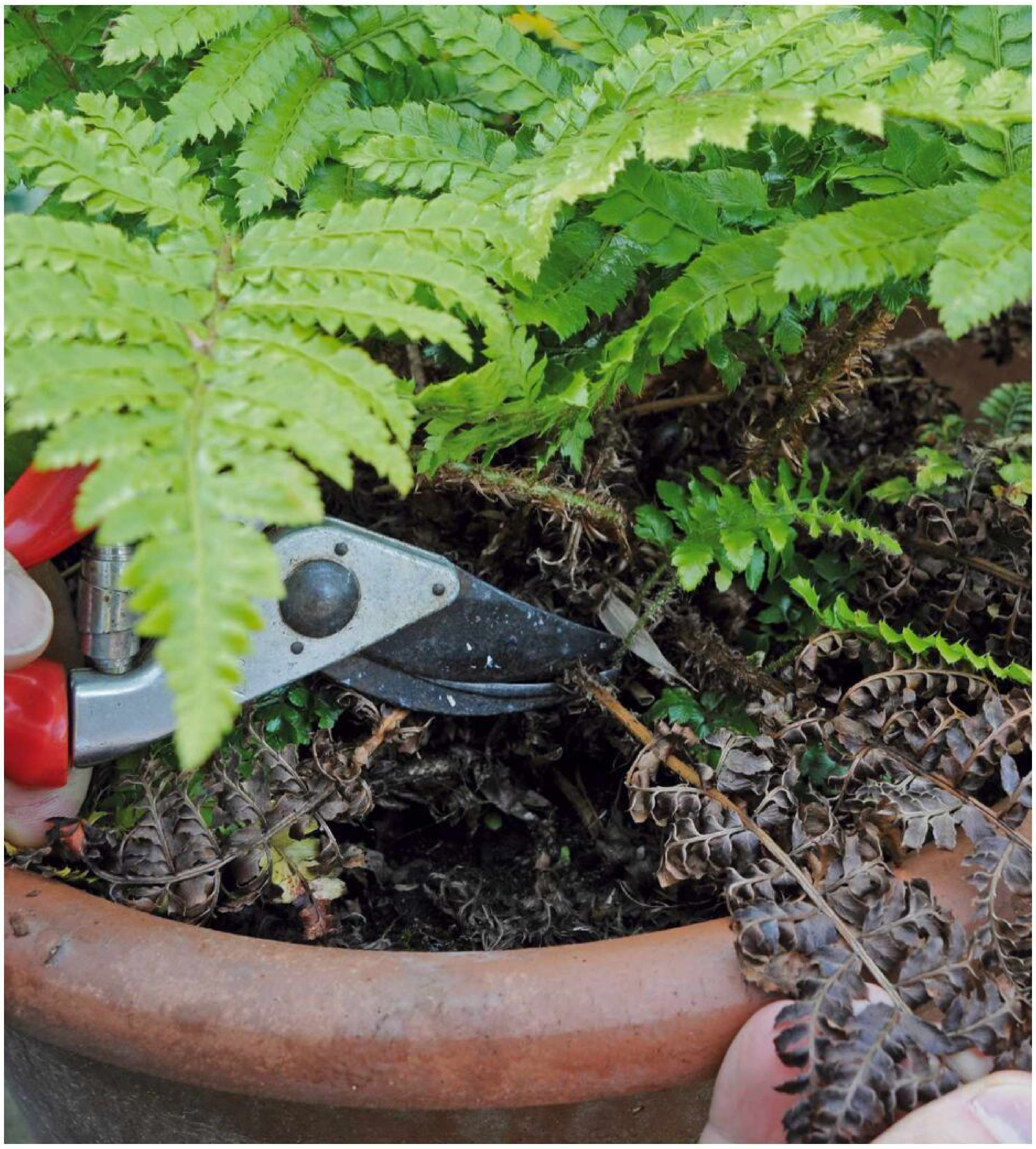

**Go in close, using the tip of your secateurs or snips, for a neat finish**

# Tidy up evergreen ferns

Remove old fronds on evergreen ferns to improve the winter display.

The newest fronds emerge in the spring at the centre of the plant, so the oldest are found around the outside – by now they may even have dropped to the ground. Cut them right back to the base, being careful not to damage any of this year's fresh growth. Throw it all on the compost heap or chop it up and add it to your rotting leaf mould.

## Up-root unwanted weeds in the lawn

Use a two-pronged daisy grubber or narrow trowel to spot-weed the lawn. Have a bucket ready to collect the weeds in and move across the lawn systematically, rooting up weeds that are choking the grass around them.

You could choose to leave some plants in place, such as speedwell and clover, to attract more pollinators into the garden – but for a smooth, uninterrupted lawn, all weeds need to be removed.

If you end up with any large bare patches in the lawn, they can be re-seeded now as the warm soil aids fast germination and growth.

**Remove tap-rooted weeds with all their roots, or they may return**

Beechgrove

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BBC TWO

**Wallflowers cost less as bare-root plants, and establish well in September**

**VIEW FROM BEECHGROVE**

## Plant out bedding wallflowers

The ground is still warm and soil moisture is increasing, so now is when we lift our spring bedding wallflowers and put them into their final flowering positions.

We sowed them in the greenhouse in June, and later lined the plants out in a spare patch of ground, later pinching them out to encourage bushy growth. We always water them well the day before transplanting, lifting the entire rootball and planting as soon as possible, 20cm apart. They need sun and a light, free-draining soil. We water after planting, then mulch and protect against rabbits.

## Don't forget

- ☐ Feed lawns, using fertiliser that is recommended for autumn application
- ☐ Reduce greenhouse watering as cooler evenings approach and the plants slow down
- ☐ Harvest beetroot at tennis-ball size: twist off the foliage and minimise staining by leaving the long, thin 'nose' intact
- ☐ Protect newly planted bulbs from mice with 6mm wire mesh

WORDS: GREG LOADES; ROSIE YEAOMANS. BEECHGROVE WORDS: MAIRI RATTRAY.
PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; TIM SANDALL

## STEP BY STEP Plant out mature topiary

**Yew, other conifers and box all make great topiary, adding impact to a planting scheme. With the ground still warm and the weather mild, now is a good time to plant large specimens. Root growth is key to making sure new plants overwinter successfully, so add some bonemeal fertiliser in the planting compost and make sure that the rootball has been well soaked before planting.**

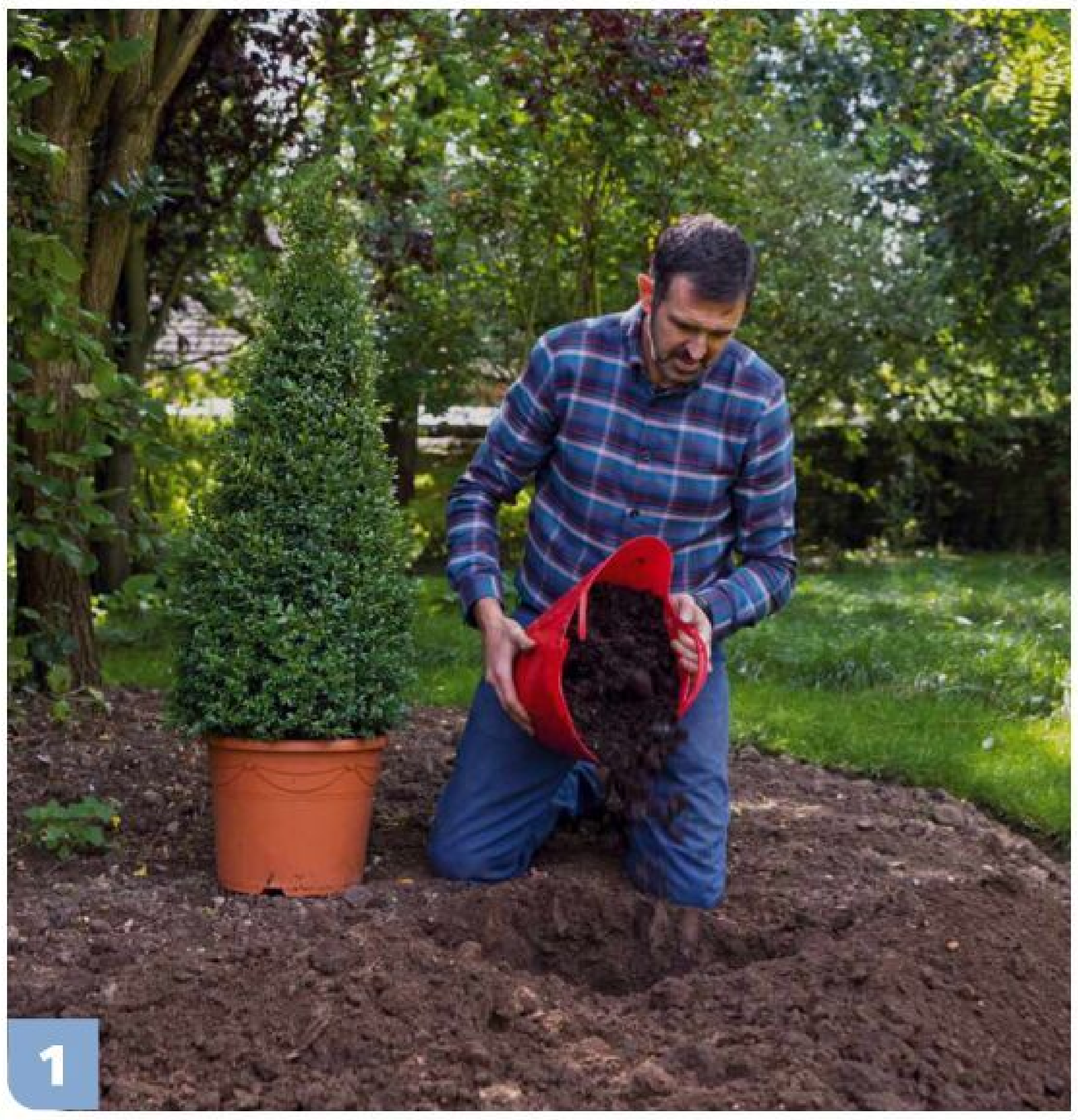
1 DIG a hole the same depth as the rootball and wider by half the width again. Break up the ground in the bottom and soak it. Thoroughly mix some planting compost with the soil.

2 KNOCK the pot off the rootball. If the roots are circling the pot at the bottom, tease them out before lowering it into the centre of the hole.

3 BACKFILL around the rootball, firming several times as you add more soil to ensure that the rootball can't move. Check that the point at which the woody trunk emerges from the compost is above ground.

4 SOAK the ground thoroughly, allowing water to penetrate into the rootball and the soil surrounding it. Repeat this at least once a week until the temperatures drop.

**VISIT GardenersWorld.com/shrubs-in** for more advice on planting shrubs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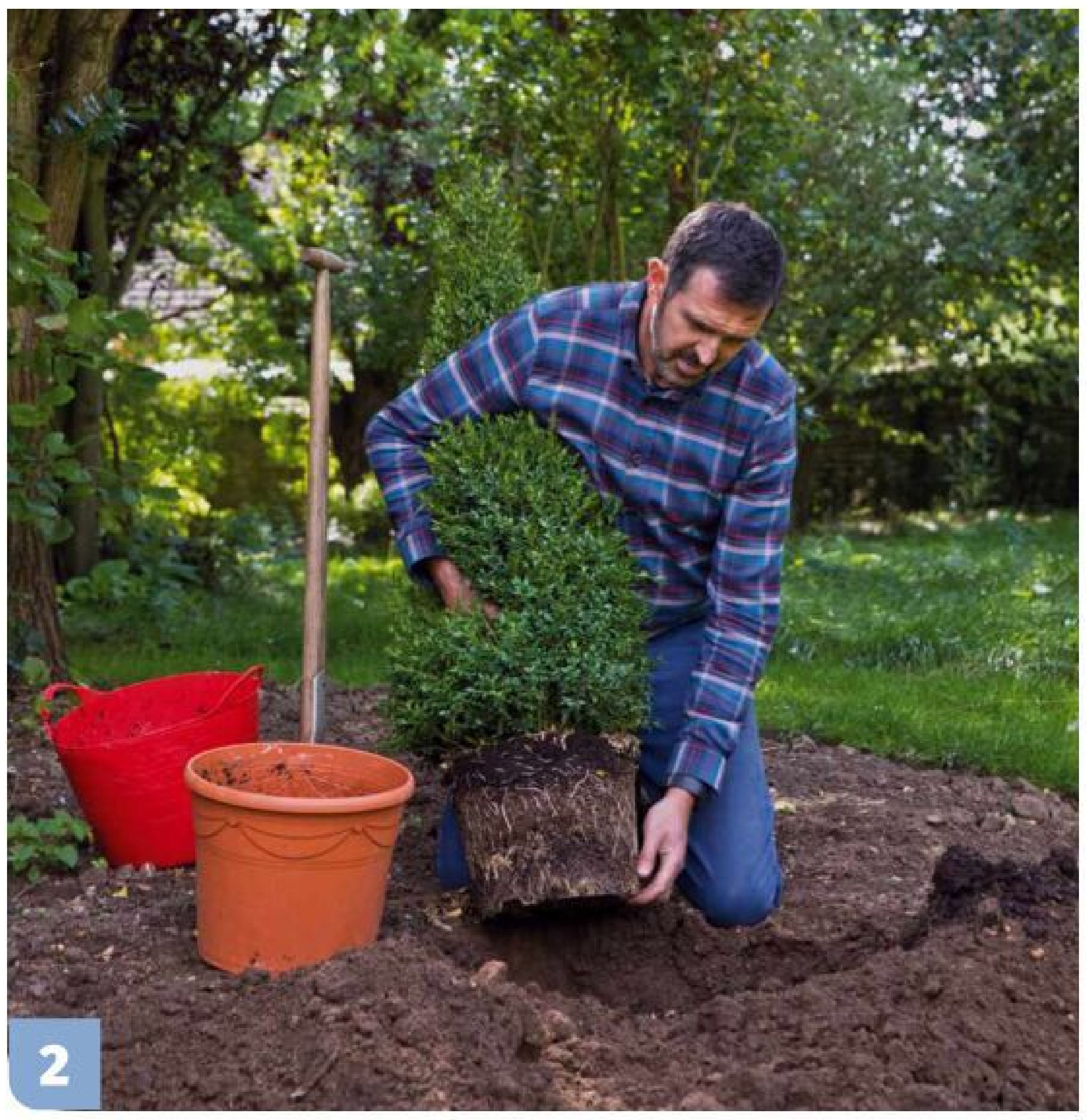
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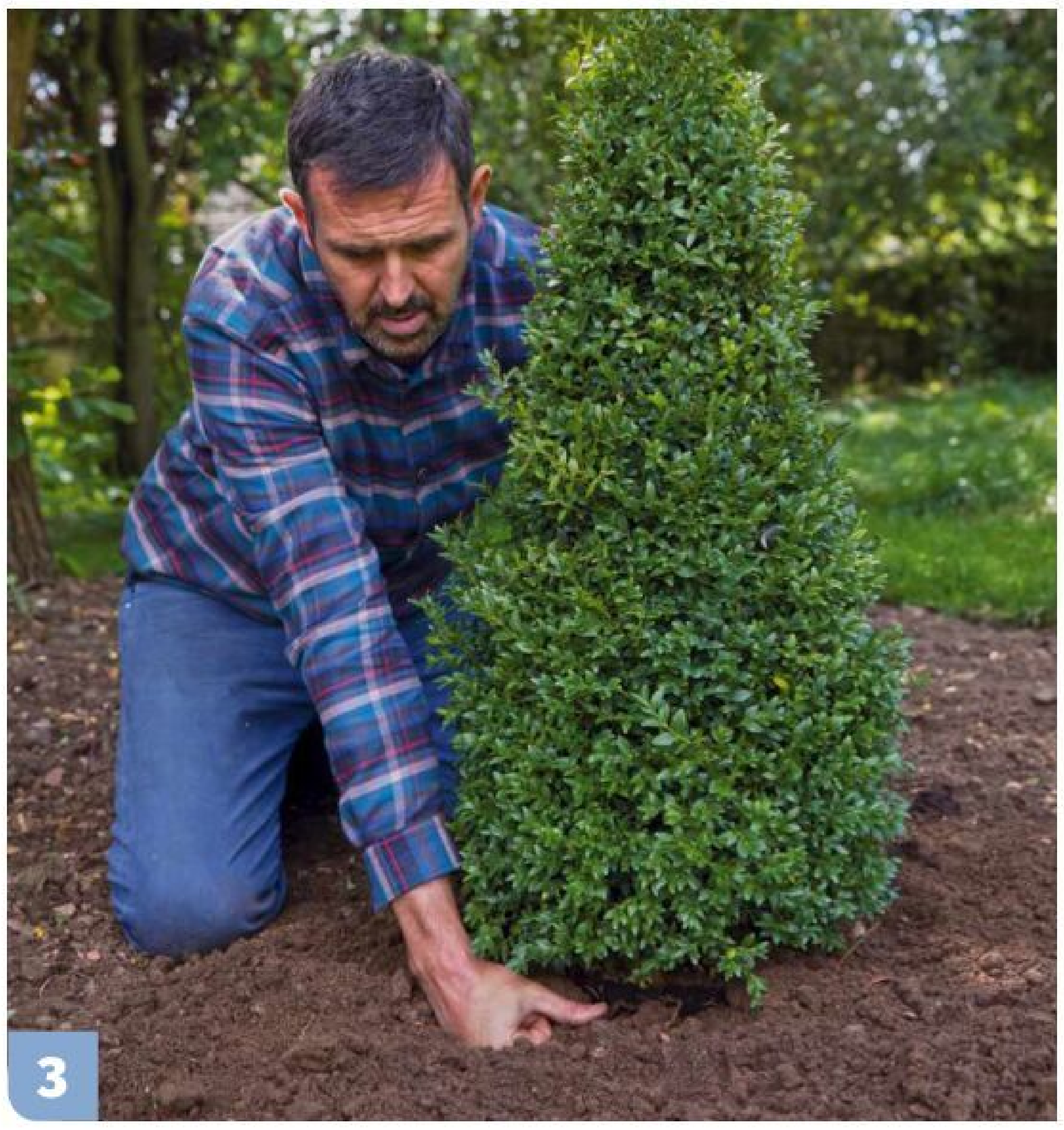
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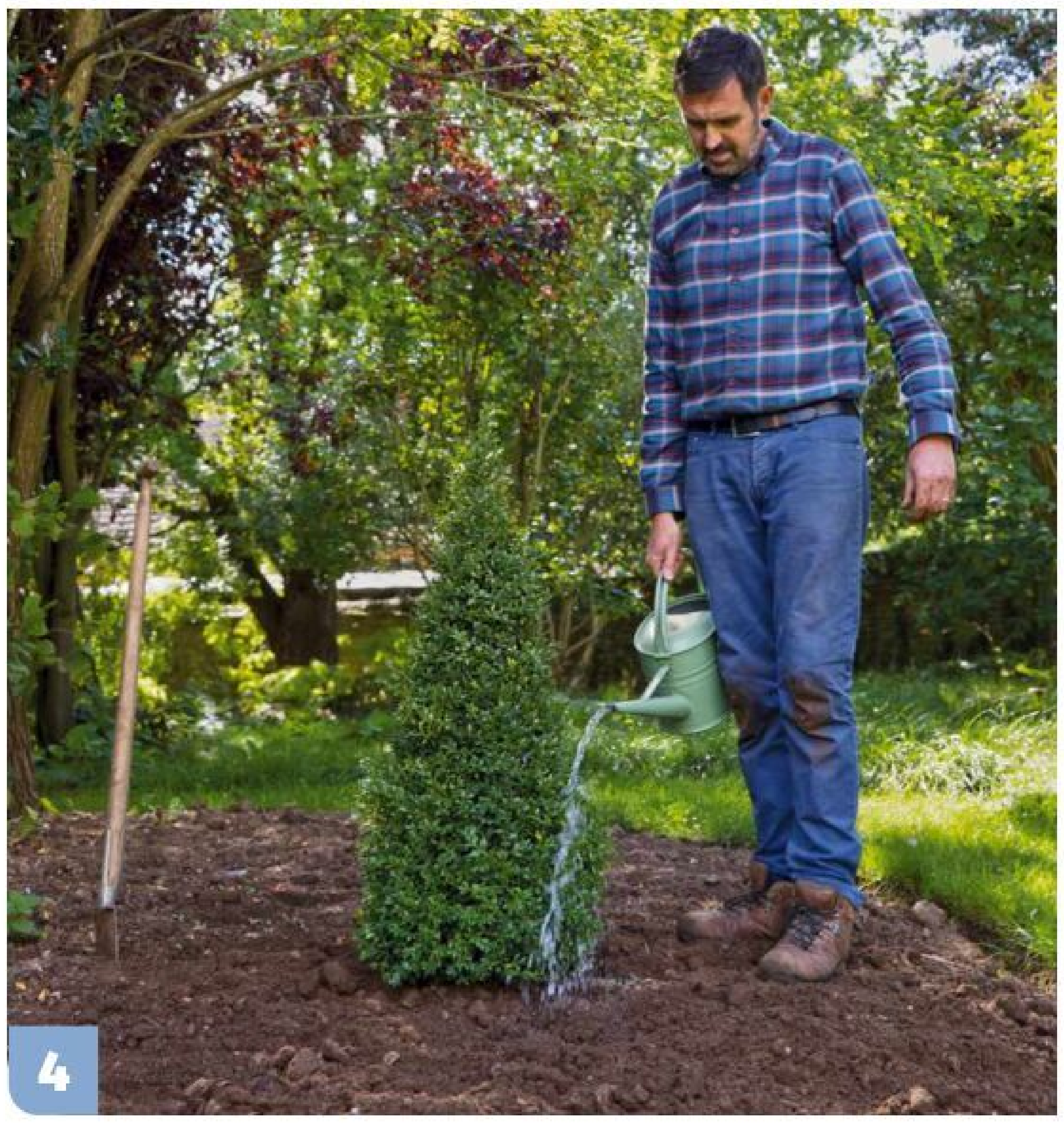
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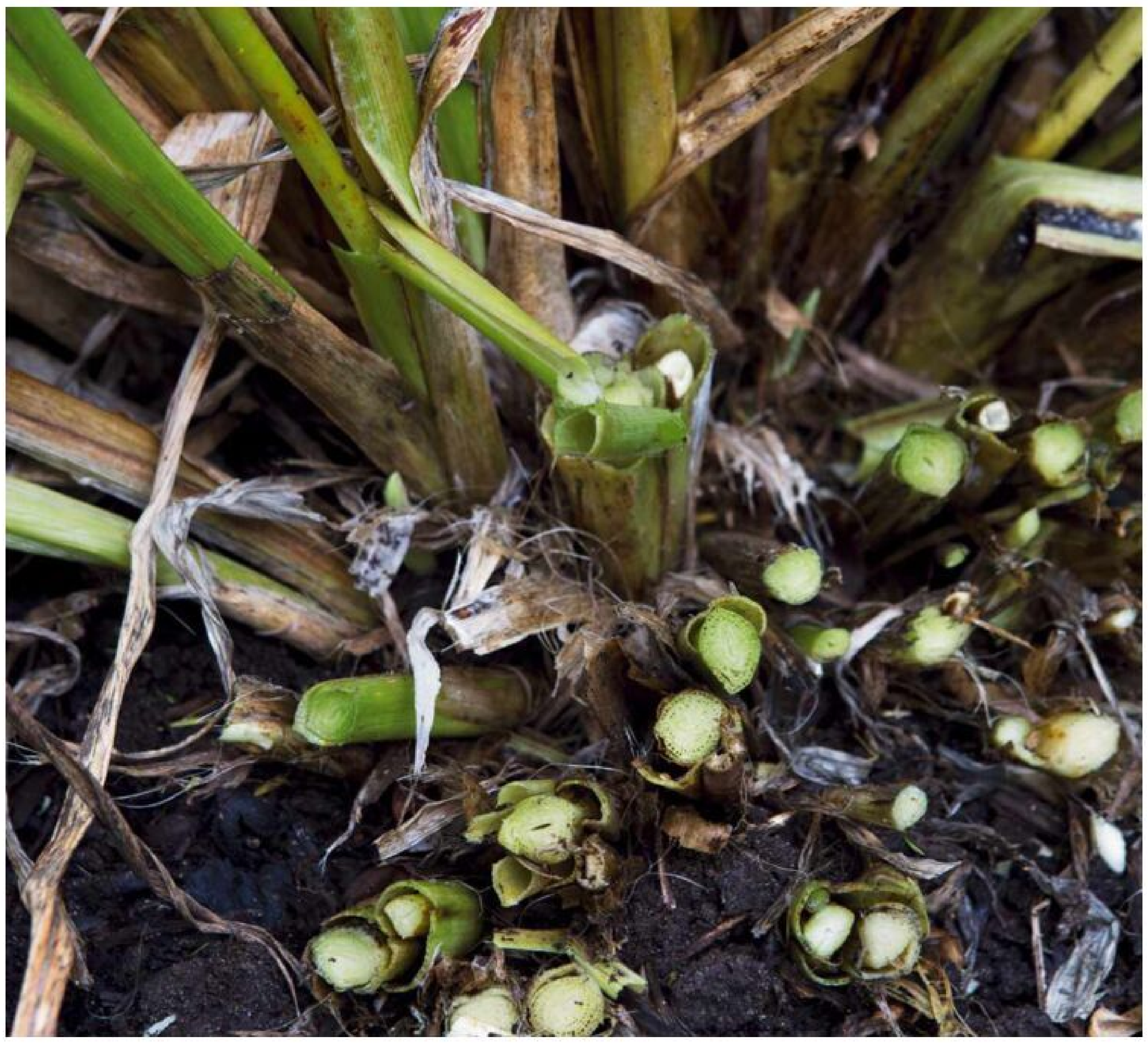
## Cut floppy daylily stems and foliage

Reclaim some space in the border by cutting back any stems of daylilies that are flopping under the weight of their seedheads. Make the cuts at ground-level, and while you're there also trim out any fading, floppy foliage.

Leave just the most upright leaves. This remaining foliage will die back naturally to feed the roots and store some energy to provide food for next year's shoots.

Pull out any weeds that have been hiding away under this growth, too.

**WATCH** Our lawn thatch guide at **GardenersWorld.com/autumn-thatch**


**Cut down as close to soil-level as possible to avoid leaving ugly stubs**

## Next month

☐ Sow lawn seed to fill in any thin or empty patches

☐ Prune and tidy up rambling roses, cutting out some of the older stems

☐ Divide overgrown clumps of rhubarb and mulch around the crowns

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; TIM SANDALL

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## Prune lavender

Trim lavenders when flowering has finished this month. This will help to keep them compact and attractive. Remove any spent flower stems and cut off the ends of the soft growth, but never prune back into the old, woody stems as these are unlikely to produce new growth again. A second cut can be made in March if needed.

# YOUR PRUNING MONTH

**Frances Tophill** shows you how to give a silver birch a good start with pruning

**The season is changing. Things may** begin to feel autumnal yet the weather can still be exceptionally fine. The garden is consistently covered in dew in the mornings, and the late-summer and autumn flowers, such as dahlias and penstemons, are in their glory days. Things can look a bit unkempt, and bright colours mingle with the flax and russet tones of senescence.

As the days slowly cool, now is the last chance to prune evergreen shrubs and hedges such as yew, laurel and photinia, and it's time to stop deadheading flowers that produce seedheads, which are useful to wildlife in winter. Lavender can be pruned now, giving the newly cut ends a chance to heal before the frosts. For a compact plant, regular pruning is necessary. Trees that are prone to bleeding in spring, like birch, are also perfect for tackling now. It's still early for leaf-fall, but we are just coming into autumn, when cold and damp weather start to influence pruning tasks, while plant hormones, which dictate when and how we prune, prepare the garden for winter.

Assess your raspberry plants first to select the canes for pruning

### Frances on TV

Catch up with Frances and the rest of the ***Gardeners' World*** team from 8pm every Friday evening this month.

BBC TWO

## Other plants to prune now

This is a good time to prepare for next year, while keeping the show going. The following plants can be pruned now to get more fruit and flowers, keep them in shape and help them stay compact.

**ROSES** Some of the newer, high-performance roses can be deadheaded through the autumn to keep their blooms coming.

**LEYLAND CYPRESS** While it's still warm and to keep this vigorous hedging tree from getting too large, trim now – but never into brown growth.

**SUMMER RASPBERRIES** Cut this year's fruited stems back to the base and tie in the current season's growth ready for fruits next year.

**COMMON HONEYSUCKLE** Trim now, once the flowers have gone. This stops the climber from becoming large and unruly.

## Don't prune these now

**Leave pruning of ornamental grasses until next year, so you and the birds enjoy their seedheads**

✗ **APPLES** These are best pruned in July and in the winter. If you missed the summer prune, then it's best to wait until the winter prune.

✗ **AUTUMN RASPBERRIES** Not to be confused with their summer siblings, pruning autumn raspberries will mean you cut off the fruits, as they keep producing right through into November.

✗ **PAMPAS GRASS** These and other large ornamental grasses keep their statuesque seedheads – also useful to birds – through winter.

✗ **SWEET CHESTNUT** This is about to produce delicious nuts, so wait until winter, when it's a great coppice species for durable timber.

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; CAROLINE HUGHES; JASON INGRAM

# Formative pruning on a young birch

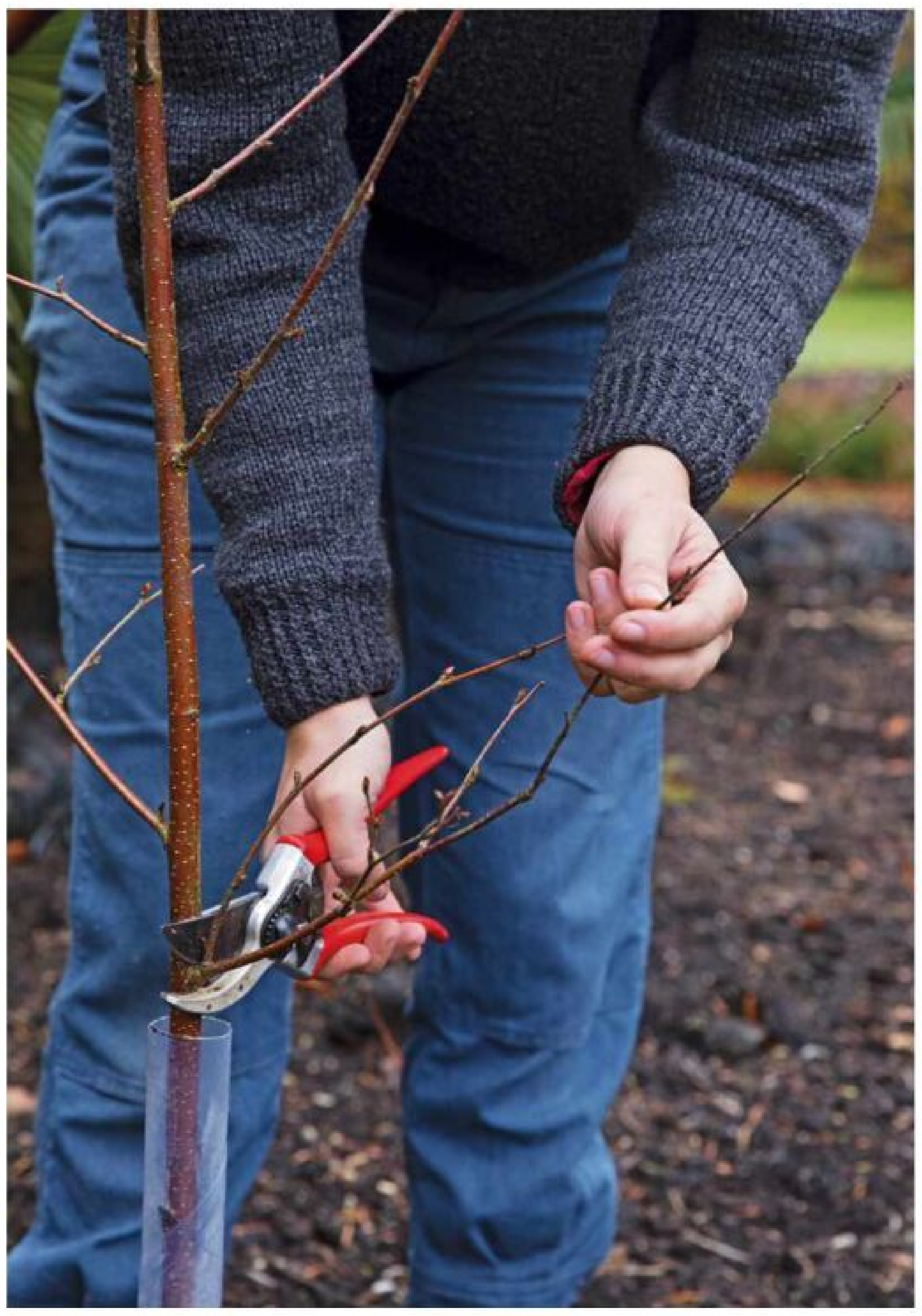
**Ideally when you plant a tree, you will** have done your research. You'll know how big it will get because it can be tricky to prune trees well, and many look best if left alone. Some trees need pruning when young: those to be used for timber or coppice, those with dead material or diseased branches, fruit trees, and young and vigorous trees that require formative pruning to achieve a good shape.

Pruning a tree when it's young means the cuts are smaller and will heal better. Pruning a birch tree while it's young will give it a better shape in later life, with a clear stem and a rounded but open top.

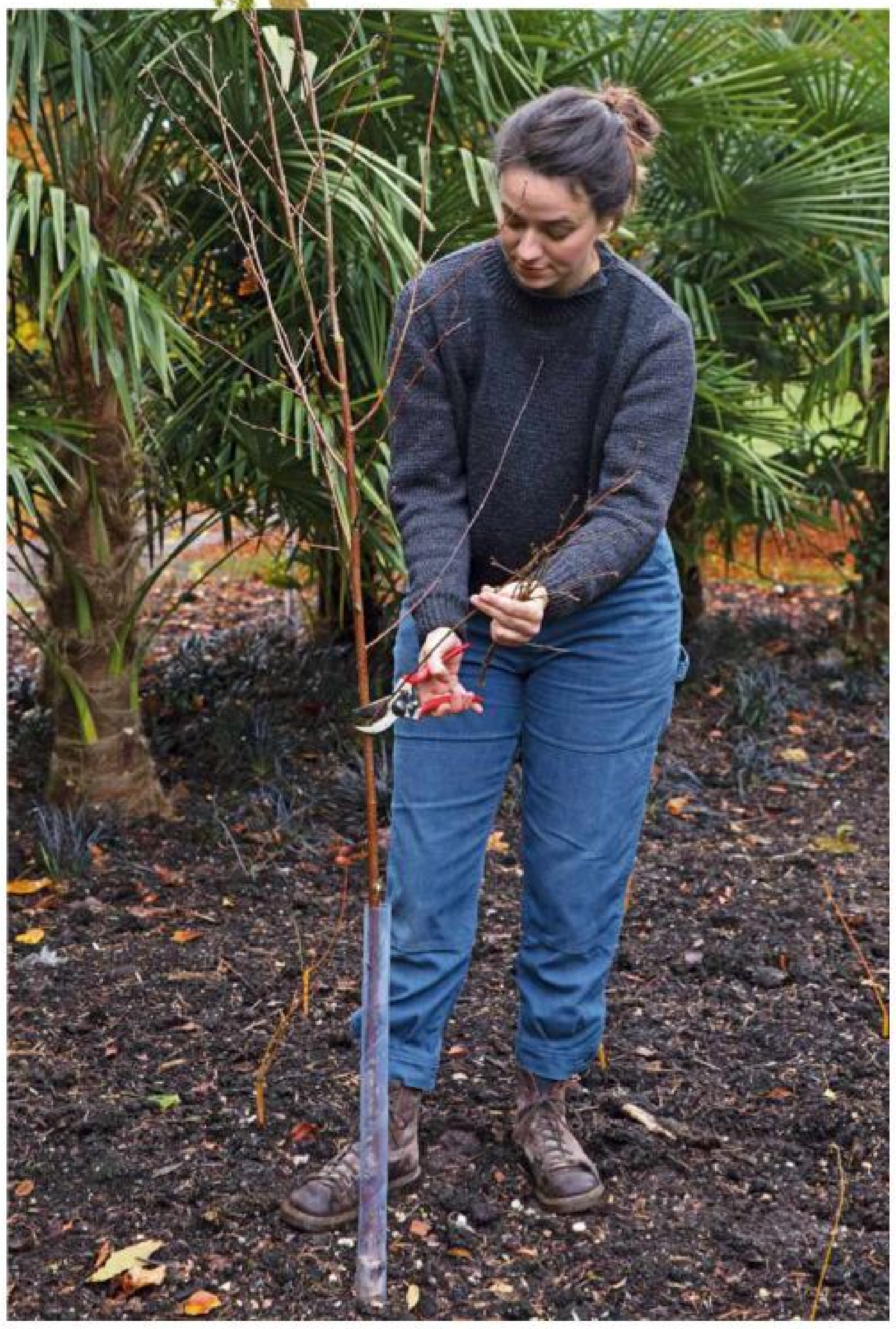
**Only prune birches from late summer to before mid-winter to prevent sap bleeding**

## Step by step

**1 PRUNE** a birch at the right time of year – September to before mid-winter. Before you even make a cut, though, stand back to assess where you're going to cut and how the tree is likely to respond to the pruning.



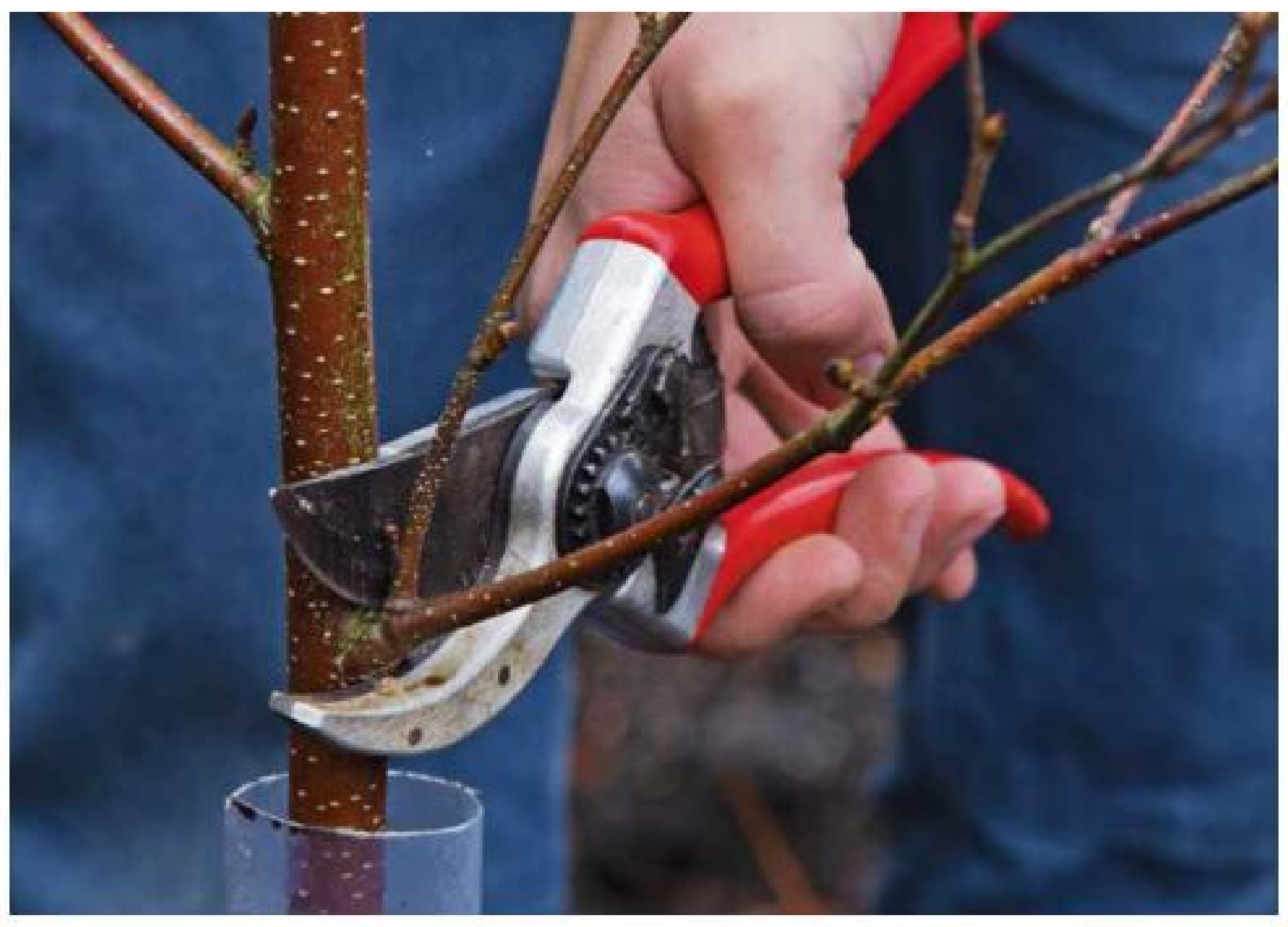
**2 REMOVE** the lowest limbs and cut them back to the trunk with clean secateurs. This will raise the canopy and give the tree a lovely clear stem, allowing you to see the beautiful silver bark as it matures.



**3 CUT** off just a few of the lower branches each year. Keep stepping back to assess it and stop before you reach the main canopy. Never cut the top branch of a tree like this, or the shape will be spoiled.

## Top tip

**Always make your cut clean and right** up to the main trunk of the tree but without being so close that you damage the trunk. It's really important to do this well. If you leave too long a snag, it could die back and allow disease to enter the tree, but if you damage the main trunk then you leave a much bigger open wound than is necessary. Cut almost next to but not on the trunk so a small 'collar' is left around the wound, which will close up to heal it.



**Cut the branch next to, but not on, the trunk**

## Also prune this way...

Any specimen tree that you are aiming to train into a clear-stemmed standard-style tree with a single stem can be pruned this way, but suit the timing to the type of tree:

- Bay – this can also be trained as a shrub
- Acer
- Rowan
- Robinia
- Crab apple
- Pine
- Prunus

## Silver birch

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
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| **Foliage** | | | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | | |
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**NEXT MONTH** Frances shows how to prune buddleia to avoid wind damage

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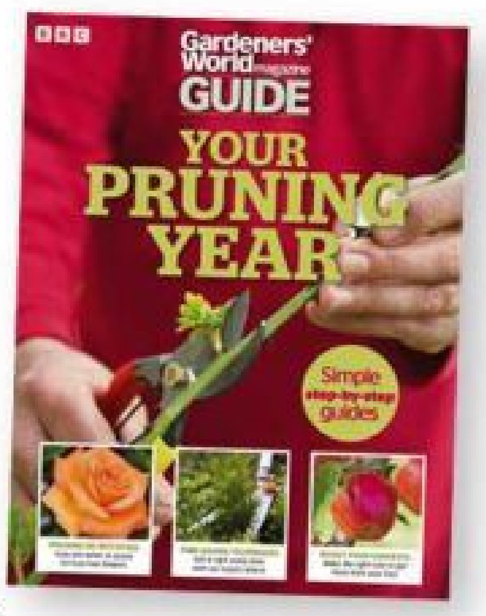

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Your questions answered

# Q&A

Edited by Emma Crawforth

## This month

**148** ***Gardeners' Question Time***
The BBC Radio 4 experts answer this month's pick of readers' queries, including:

- Stopping earwigs, vine weevils and slugs
- Growing vegetables in a shady spot
- Maximising pea harvests

## Pocket plum

**It starts with smooth, green plums becoming longer and** banana-shaped as if making a pocket on the short side. Later, they turn pale and take on a shrivelled appearance before developing a whitish bloom and falling from the tree. No stone has formed inside, and the fruits are inedible.

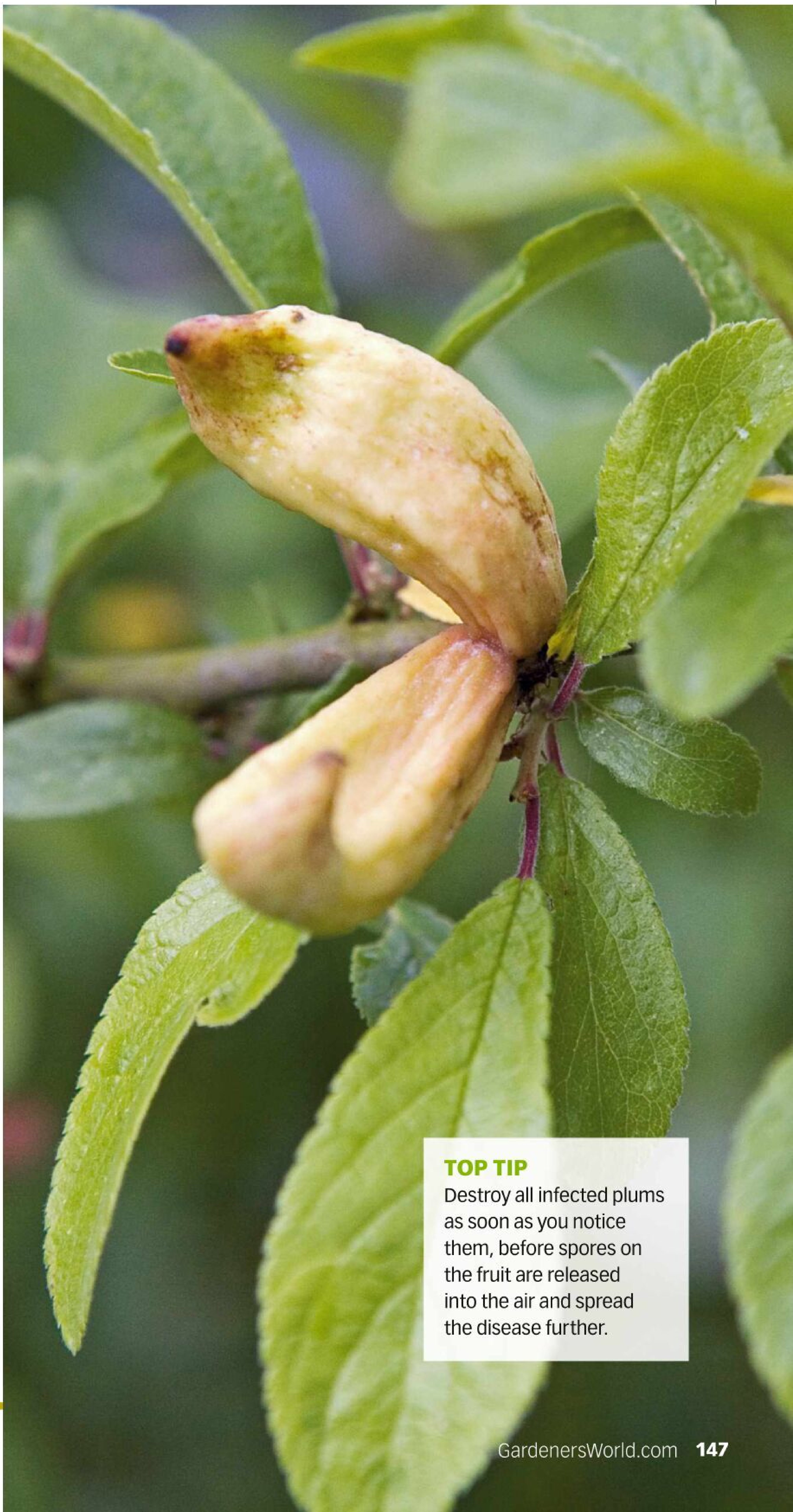
The fungus causing this is *Taphrina pruni*, which is related to the disease that causes peach leaf curl. It is thought to have a similar life cycle, with airborne spores infecting the twigs, which in turn may become thick and deformed, sometimes forming dense clusters of live and dead wood called witches' brooms. The fungus then spreads from the twigs into the tree's flowers and fruits.

Cut off infected branches with all their fruits this month. Don't leave it any longer, as plums should not be pruned any later in the year or you'll make them more susceptible to silver leaf disease, which spreads most strongly between September and May.

Clear up the ground beneath the tree, too, especially if fruits have fallen. There are no chemicals you can use for this, so tracing the infection to prevent further spread is your best course of action.

Emma

Emma Crawforth, Gardening Editor



### Q Why are fruits on my plum tree banana-shaped?

Kerris, Staffordshire

**A EMMA SAYS** This is a classic symptom of pocket plum, which is more common in damp, cool conditions. Follow the advice on this page to guarantee healthy fruits in the future.

**WATCH** video guides and get tips on how to deal with problems in the garden at **GardenersWorld.com/problems**

**Contact us**
Email your questions to **Q&A@gardenersworld.com** or write to us at the address on p152.

**TOP TIP**
Destroy all infected plums as soon as you notice them, before spores on the fruit are released into the air and spread the disease further.

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; TIM SANDALL

# Gardeners' Question Time

Our experts tackle your gardening problems, including hungry badgers, a dingy veg patch and some very wobbly dahlias

**Bob Flowerdew**
Bob is an organic gardener and has designed his garden to produce lots of veg, fruit and cut flowers.

**Christine Walkden**
Garden writer Christine appears on BBC1's *The One Show*. She is also a lecturer and tour leader.

**Matt Biggs**
Matt trained at Kew and has been gardening professionally for more than 30 years.

## Q Help! My veg patch is shady and full of snails

Jess, London

**A CHRISTINE SAYS** I would not give up on the vegetables, despite the shade and snails.

Leaf vegetables such as lettuce, cabbages, Brussels sprouts and salad crops do reasonably well in this situation. Is it possible to prune the trees a bit to reduce the shade that they cast, by lifting or thinning the canopy?

Control the snails by going out at night and physically removing and then disposing of them. Beer traps are said to work, but I have never found them that good at reducing the snail population. Slugs, yes, but not snails.

Growing your plants in pots or modules first, so they are a reasonable size before planting them out, may also result in more success than sowing direct.

Careful, sparing use of slug pellets based on ferric phosphate may also work as a last resort. Read the instructions – do not over-apply, and make sure they are stored safely.

Raise or thin a tree's canopy to help reduce the shade it casts

**Q&A TEAM ANSWER**
**Shaded veg patches**

Module-sown crops have more chance against slugs and snails

**A MATT SAYS** Many different vegetables will grow quite happily in a degree of shade. Try beetroot, carrots, chard, kale, kohlrabi, runner beans, spinach, peas, lettuce, radicchio and oriental vegetables.

Sowing seeds in modules or pots on the windowsill, and then transplanting them, will give the plants a good start.

Herbs for part-shade include chives, coriander, sweet cicely and mint. Plant mint in a large pot, then plunge the pot into the ground with the rim just above the surface, to reduce the plants' ability to spread. Mint needs re-potting every one or two years.

Fruit that grows in some shade includes rhubarb, redcurrants, raspberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants. Make sure your crops are well watered after planting out. This is a great opportunity to experiment.

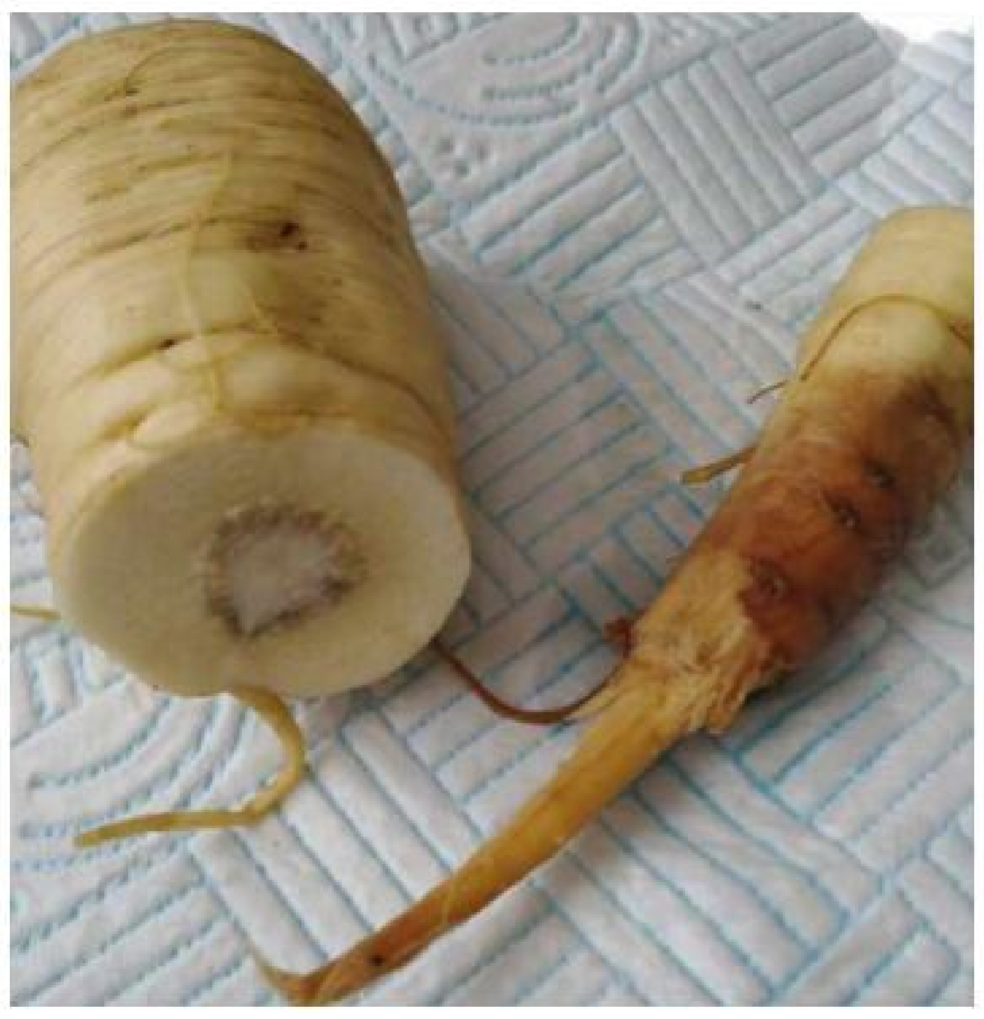
## Q My parsnips are weird: is powdery mildew to blame?

Leanne Coleman, by email

**A BOB SAYS** Parsnips exhibit both downy and powdery mildew, neither of which is serious, or is this problem. They can also in rare instances suffer some from diseases of carrots such as violet root rot – which this is not, either.

I think your parsnips have canker, which is a symptom of a fungal infection rather than a specific disease itself. Even canker-resistant varieties of parsnip may develop some lesions – although yours are not the usual dark colour.

There are various factors that make canker more likely to occur in a parsnip crop, such as drought, over-rich soil, water lodging in the crown and damage to the root from tools. Liming, or dressing the soil with wood ashes, will help protect parsnip sowings against this problem in the future.



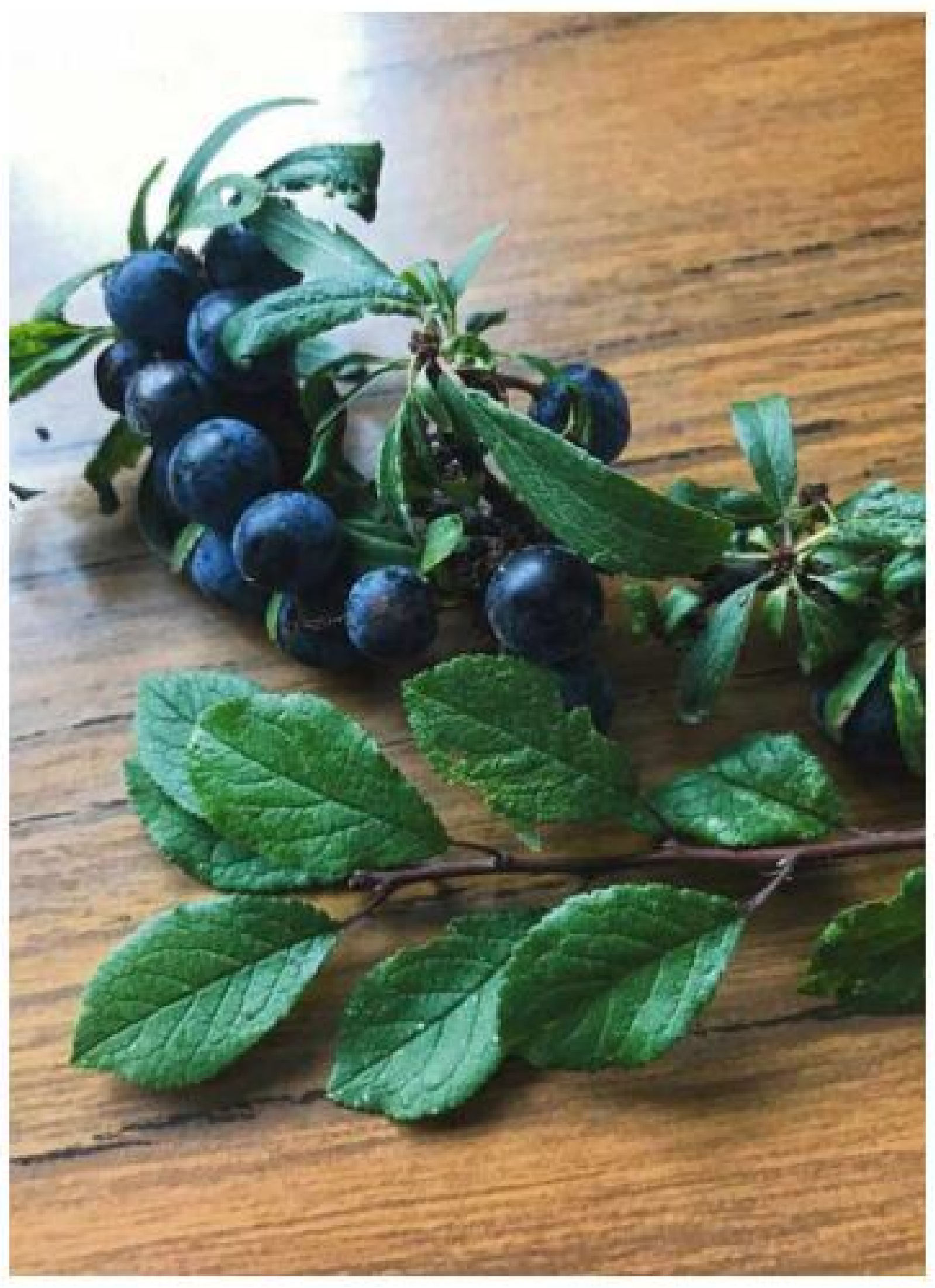
Parsnips mature slowly, so have lots of time to pick up problems

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS

## Q How should I best look after my indoor hibiscus seedlings?

Catherine Seabrooke, by email

A **MATT SAYS** If well established, give them tomato food to ripen the wood, and lots of light and humidity, away from cold. Cut the main stem back in spring for bushy growth, repeating this with the lower stems when they start branching. Feed with general house plant food during the growing season. Pot them on early next year, but don't prune them at the same time.



**Blackthorn can grow as a tree or a large shrub**

## Q Can you help identify this plant? I have seen it growing in the hedges

Myra Davis, by email

A **CHRISTINE SAYS** I would be very happy to find this in a hedge as it is *Prunus spinosa* – the sloe. The dark fruit makes excellent food for wildlife and excellent sloe gin… if you are so inclined.

The plant produces small, white flowers in early spring, followed by these small, blue-black fruits in the autumn. It is often seen in hedges separating fields and was widely planted in the past, either on its own or along with other native hedging material, which makes an informal wildlife hedge.

It is seldom seen growing on its own these days, which is a shame. If you like sloe gin, having your own crop is fantastic, and it does make a good small garden tree for wildlife.

**Flea beetle damage is more noticeable on young plants**

## Q Can I eat leaves that are affected by flea beetle?

Chris Bartram, by email

A **BOB SAYS** I believe we don't eat damaged leaves with holes in them for aesthetic and hygiene reasons. There is a remote risk of picking up some disease from bird saliva or mollusc slime, or just conceivably some mould or rot. But don't panic, normal washing and cooking are usually quite sufficient measures.

## Q Why has my potted tree peony never flowered?

Rosemarie, by email

A **CHRISTINE SAYS** I wonder if the pot that it is growing in is large enough? I would suggest feeding with a potash-rich fertiliser such as tomato food every week when the peony is in active growth. Far better would be to plant it in the garden, if this is possible.

Water the pot thoroughly before transplanting, and ensure that the plant is kept moist through dry spells to ensure establishment.

**Tree peonies can take up to four years to start flowering**

**Tumbling stems can be pulled to bring heavy pots crashing down**

## Q What house plants should I avoid to keep kids and cats safe?

Andrea Pierce, by email

A **MATT SAYS** Most animals instinctively avoid poisonous plants, and children should be taught not to eat plant material from infanthood.

Make your own risk assessment, especially where there are small children present. Don't just think about toxicity, though: allowing overhanging stems to tumble over the side of furniture within reach of small, tugging hands can also be very dangerous.

House plants to avoid for cats include peace lily, dieffenbachia, Swiss cheese plant, devil's ivy, aloe vera, figs and euphorbias. *For more information, check the Horticultural Trades Association's guide to potentially harmful plants at* ***bit.ly/harmful-plants-hta***

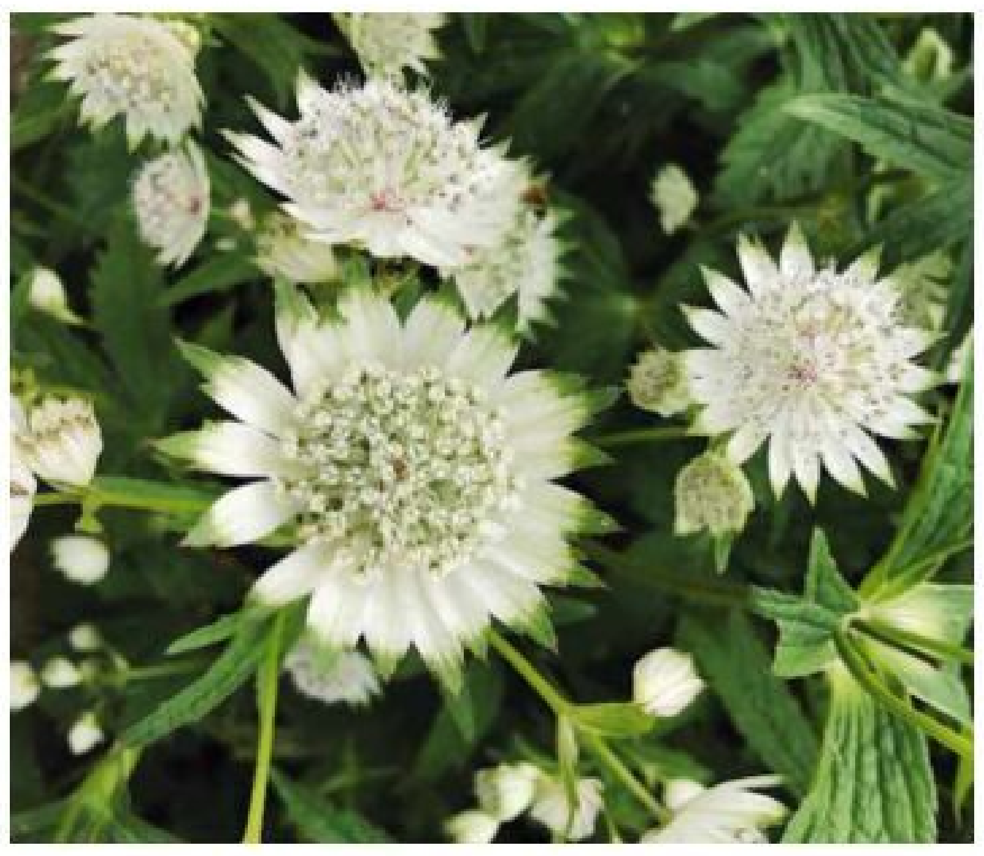
Green manures can improve soil after hungry crops like potatoes

## Q Why is my phacelia okay after potatoes, but not after onions?

Brian Hilton, by email

**A BOB SAYS** This could be an interesting observation of a 'companion' effect; many plants will exude fluids into the soil that prevent seeds from germinating, and others that alter soil life activity to suit themselves.

However, it's also likely that the loosened soil following spuds was easier for the seeds to grow in than the hard bed left after onions.



Astrantias prefer the partial shade of a nearby tree or shrub

## Q I saw this plant at Chatsworth. Can you tell me what it is?

Sandy Dobbie, Cornwall

**A CHRISTINE SAYS** This is astrantia, a herbaceous perennial. It's often grown in some shade, but a sunny, moist spot is ok. It likes moisture-retentive, rich soil, and may need watering in dry spells.

You can buy it in various colours and it makes an excellent cut flower, with distinctive bracteoles surrounding whorls of tiny flowers.

## Q My peas grow poorly, but my beans grow very strongly. Why would this be?

B Jandu, by email

**A CHRISTINE SAYS** The initial germination and growth of direct-sown peas is greatly influenced by soil moisture.

Once a pea starts to germinate, if it becomes dry again the new growth will often shrivel up below the soil surface before it can be seen. To get your peas to establish strongly you need to water them thoroughly and regularly.

Once they are growing away they do not require a lot of water until they start to flower. They should receive a good soaking once a week while they are in flower and when the pods are swelling. Mulching around the plants helps, too.

Mice can also eat the seeds. One way to avoid this is to sow your peas into pots and then to plant them out once they have reached a suitable size.

The hot, dry early summer was hard for June-sown peas

Removing the growth tip directs energy to the rest of the plant

## Q My dahlias are toppling over in the wind. What can I do?

Peter Tucker, Essex

**A MATT SAYS** If you pinch out dahlias as young plants they become bushy, rather than tall. When they are about 25cm tall with four sets of leaves on strong stems, cut the main stems just above the top pair of leaves. The stems below will produce side shoots, making the plant bushier and more floriferous.

Pinching out delays flowering, too, so leave some shoots and remove others to prolong the display. You can extend flowering still further by pinching out new side shoots that appear later on.

If your dahlias are producing flower buds this month, you may want to leave them to bloom, because we're nearing the end of the season. You may still need to stake your plants because of the weight of the foliage and blooms.

## Q What can I do about the critters eating my dahlias?

Judith High, West Yorkshire

**A BOB SAYS** You've done well to deal with the earwigs, vine weevils and slugs, however I think these may persist, and in some number, as the dahlias' surroundings, as shown in the photo you sent in, are quite congested and hard to police.

Sadly, dahlias are tasty to most herbivorous pests, so their damage is unlikely to be caused by just one muncher. I guarantee, if you go out on a warm, damp night with a bright torch you will see a convoy of fat snails as well as surviving slugs, and if you sneak up quietly so as not to disturb them, platoons of earwigs chomping away.

Furthermore, I wonder if by now your soil and plants have become tired, so they've not enough vigour to grow strongly. I suggest you propagate new plants: grow these in the same place but in large tubs, stood in double saucers with the gap between the saucers filled with water, thus safely moated.

**Q&A HOT TOPIC Dahlias**

Dahlias' exuberant blooms can make them unstable and top-heavy

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS; JASON INGRAM

## Q How do I move my eight-year-old bay?

J Page, by email

**A MATT SAYS** Established plants are hard to move but now is a good time, while the soil is warm. Dig around the plant for a large rootball, tidy up damaged roots with secateurs, then replant at the same level as before, and mulch. Stake if needed. Water well after planting, and through next year.

**Take the largest rootball possible to avoid feeder root damage**

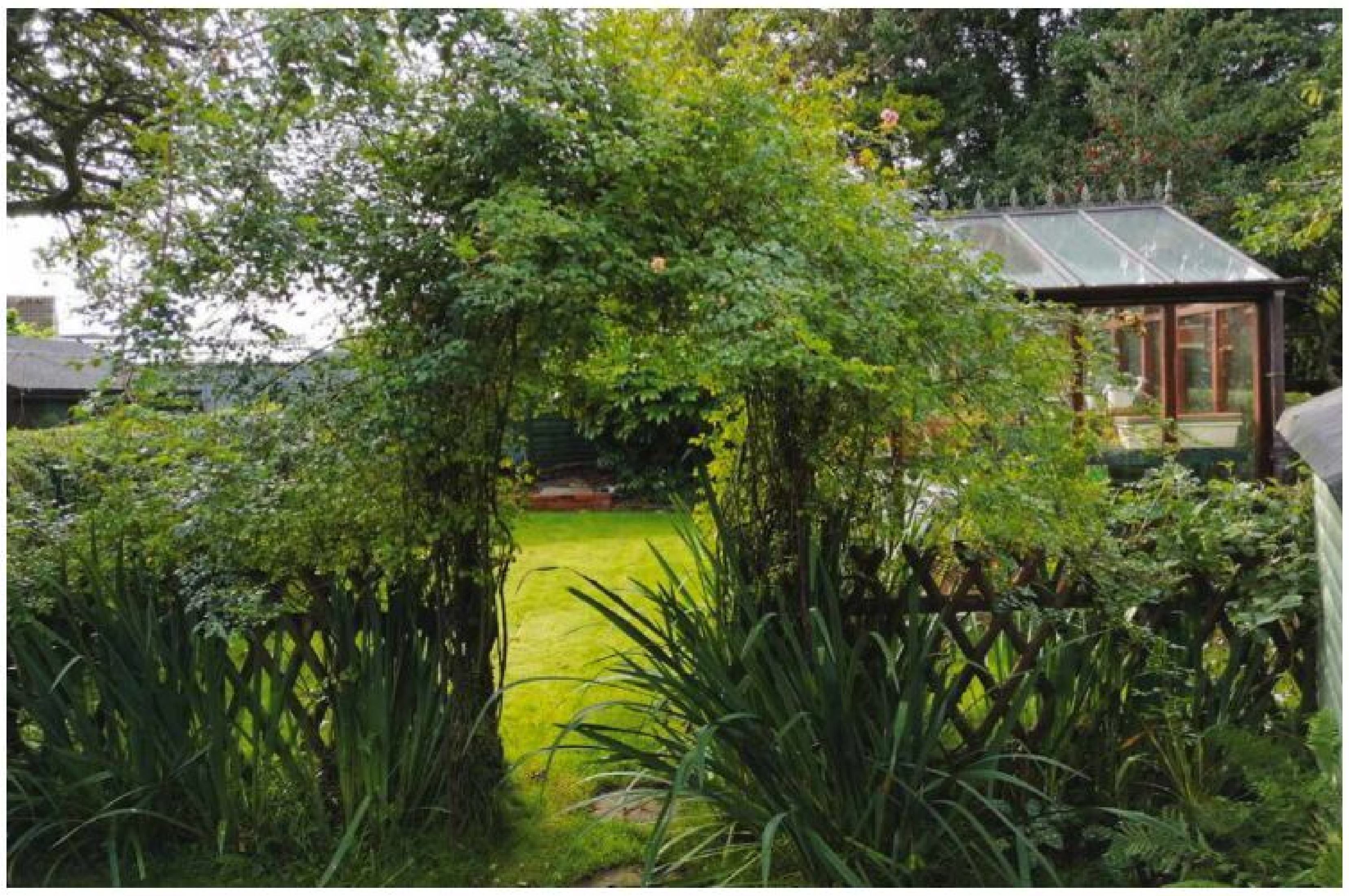
## Q I'm not sure what rambler this is. Should I prune it?

Cheryl Finnigan, Lancashire

**A CHRISTINE SAYS** I don't think this is a rambling rose – it looks more like a climber. Ramblers tend to produce several strong, long stems with few side-shoots.

Some modern varieties are very difficult to tell apart, so for now, ask yourself the question – does it need pruning? If so, remove up to a third of the growth and then tie in the remaining stems. Cut out any dead, diseased or damaged shoots, and any that are crossing.

You may be able to get the plant identified by taking some of the flowering stems to a rose show. Then it would be easier to know what to do with it in the long run.



**Ramblers will grow strongly from the base, with one flush of flowers**

## Q My ipomoea won't flower but my daughter's has. Why?

Rowlie Price, by email

**A MATT SAYS** Ipomoea need the heat of a warm summer in a sheltered, sunny spot – even better if it is against a south- or west-facing wall. Once the plants are established, feed them with tomato fertiliser to encourage lots of flowers.

**Mexican native *Ipomoea lobata* prefers hot, sunny conditions**

advertisement feature

# Autumn's arrival

As summer draws to a close, look out for the Woodland Trust's key signs of autumn

There's always something magical about watching the seasons change, and by now you've probably already noticed the beginnings of autumn, both in your garden and beyond.

For meteorologists, autumn begins on 1 September as the year is split into quarterly seasons based on annual temperature cycles. But, in the astronomical calendar, the start of autumn is marked by the equinox later in September, when the daylight and dark hours are equal.

It might not always feel like autumn on these dates, but the Woodland Trust highlights many signs in nature that indicate the seasons are changing.

If you spot any of these signs, you can record them through the Woodland Trust's Nature's Calendar project. By adding to this dataset, you'll be helping the charity to track the effects of weather and climate change on wildlife across the UK.

### Signs of autumn

Here are a few of the main changes to look out for:

- Leaves change colour as there's less sunlight, so deciduous trees stop making chlorophyll (the green pigment in leaves) and fade into rusty autumnal hues.
- Many birds, including cuckoos, swifts and swallows, migrate south to warmer climates for the winter, while others, such as redwings, fieldfares and waxwings, arrive in the UK from colder countries.
- Seasonal fruits begin to appear, from blackberries in bramble bushes to hedgerows bursting with elderberries, sloes and rosehips.
- Various tree and plant species also undergo noticeable changes – ivy starts flowering, fungi thrives in the damp weather, and tree seeds, like acorns and conkers, ripen and fall to the ground.

PHOTOGRAPHY: David Rodway/WTML. Lottie's Wood, November 2017.

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Badgers love crane fly larvae, and will dig up lawns to reach them

# Q How can I stop badgers from digging up my garden?

S Sheppard, by email

**A BOB SAYS** Legally we're not allowed to interfere with badgers: they must be left alone, and neither must their setts, nor access to their setts, be blocked. You can install a fence, but not if that fence is deemed to be obstructing access to the sett.

I doubt individual plant guards would be a problem, but they are likely to be ineffective as badgers are strong, dextrous and cunning. Unpleasant-tasting or prickly plants should be less damaged, though I'd not rely on it as they rip stuff up to get worms underneath.

There has been an increase in reports of damage; I suspect their wild home is short of prey and our gardens are becoming their larders.

You could leave them out food (tinned, cereal-based dog food), so they pig out and go home to sleep it off, rather than trashing the garden. This does however risk making them dependent on you, and may not be popular with neighbours. *For advice on how to live alongside badgers, download the RSPCA factsheet at* ***bit.ly/rspca-badgers***

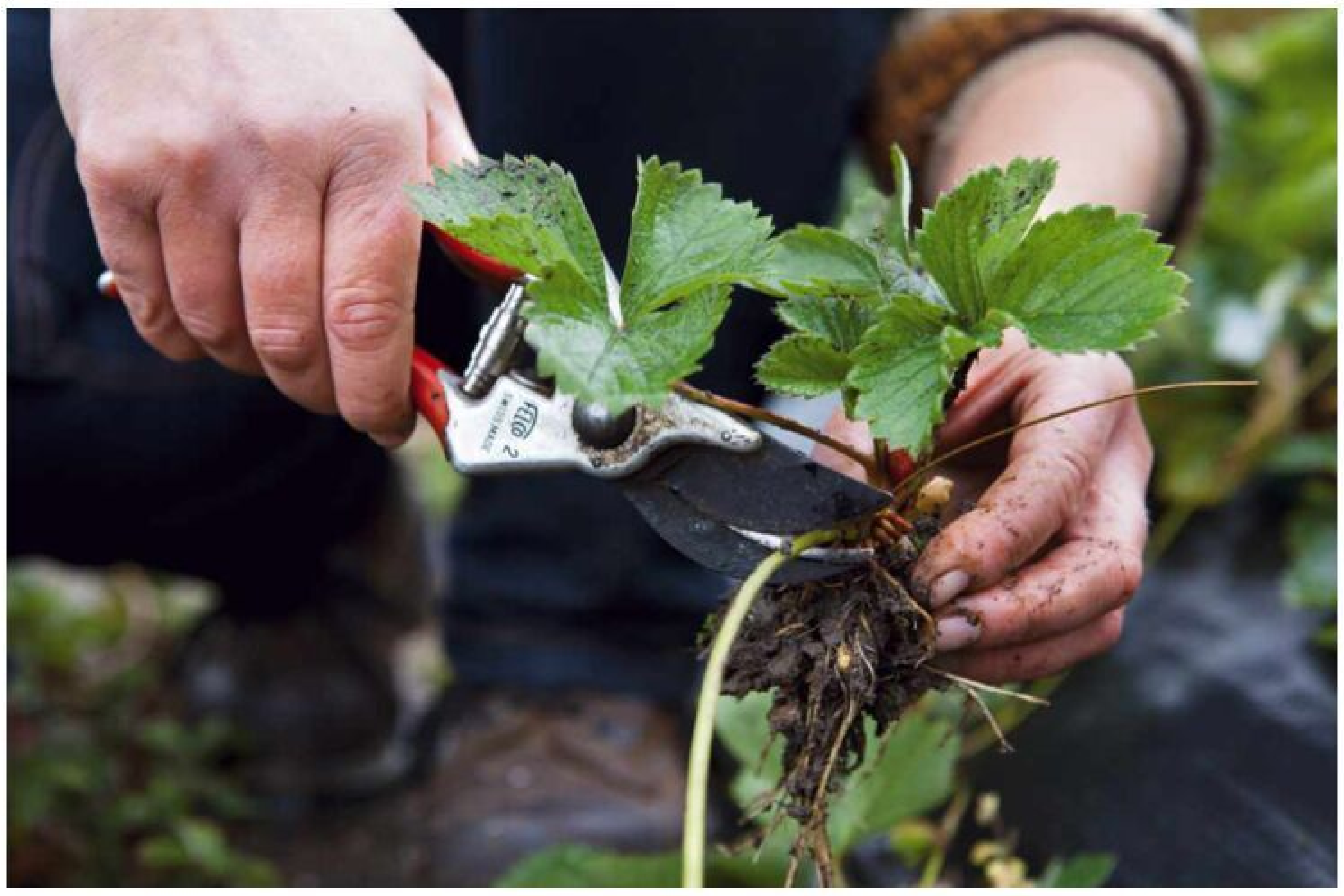
# Q What do I do with runners from strawberries in winter?

Charlotte Davison, by email

**A MATT SAYS** Strong, healthy runners should be taken from your best, most vigorous plants.

Once they have developed a healthy root system, plants can be cut from the parent and planted into a new bed. It's not too late to do this now: the warm soil encourages root growth. Dig in plenty of well-rotted organic matter to prepare the site. Spread out and bury the roots, keeping the crowns level with the soil, and firm them in.

Spares can be grown in pots under glass for an early crop. These will flower in early to mid-spring and pollen can be transferred between flowers using a small paintbrush. If it's warm, open the greenhouse to let in pollinators.


Only cut the runner connected to the main plant when roots are ready

# Q Can I save my rhododendron from vine weevils?

Sylvia Innes, by email

**A CHRISTINE SAYS** Vine weevil attack leaves and roots. Adults chew notches around leaf margins: although unsightly, this will not destroy the plant. The real problem is the larvae, which eat away at the roots, killing the plant. Ensure the pot is well watered before applying a nematode control product.

Apply vine weevil nematodes in the late spring or early autumn

# Q My viburnum is curling up and going brown. Why?

Dave Johnson, by email

**A BOB SAYS** The browning of the leaves is probably water-stress. Looking at the photo that you sent in, I suspect the plant needs to be fed and watered more often.

There are signs of something eating leaves, but not enough are gone to have fed many caterpillars to maturity. I reckon this viburnum has been host to caterpillars, likely those of tortrix moth, but that they were predated at an early stage.

*Viburnum tinus* can be attacked by tortrix moth caterpillars

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PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; GETTY/RICHARD MCMANUS; JASON INGRAM

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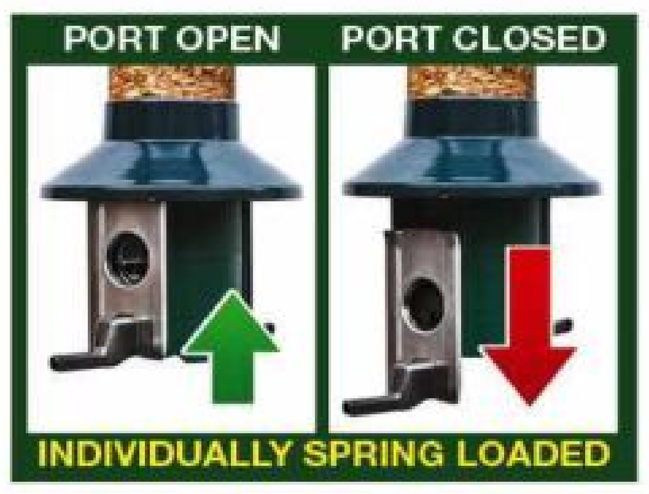

A
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C
nyjer/ thistle seed feeder
D
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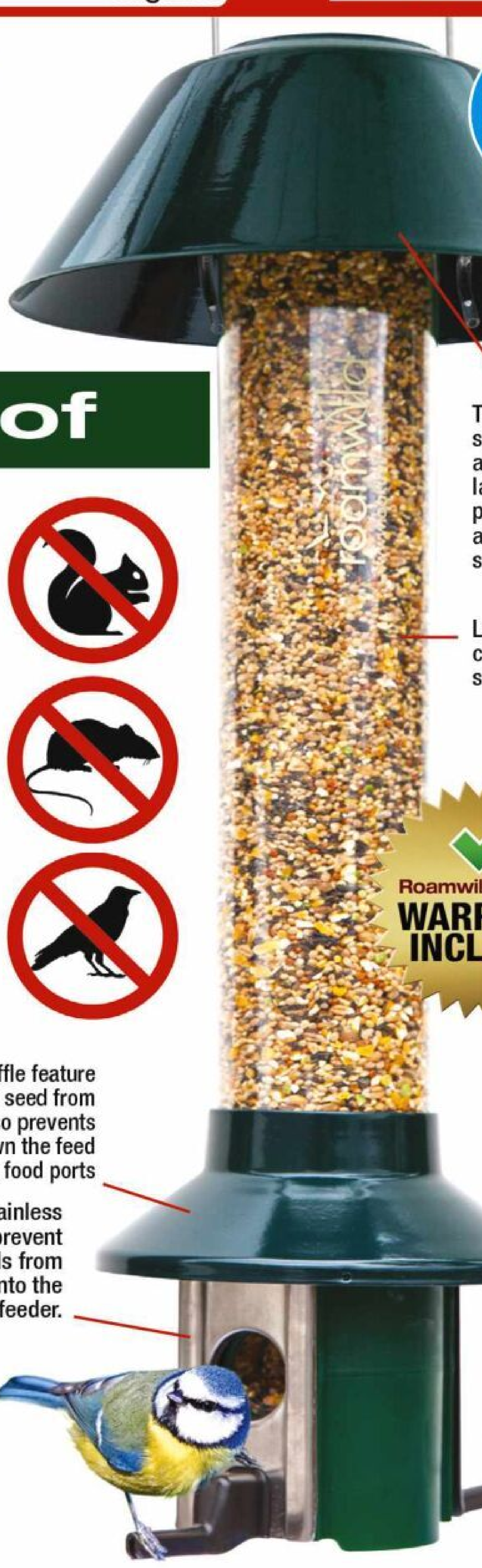

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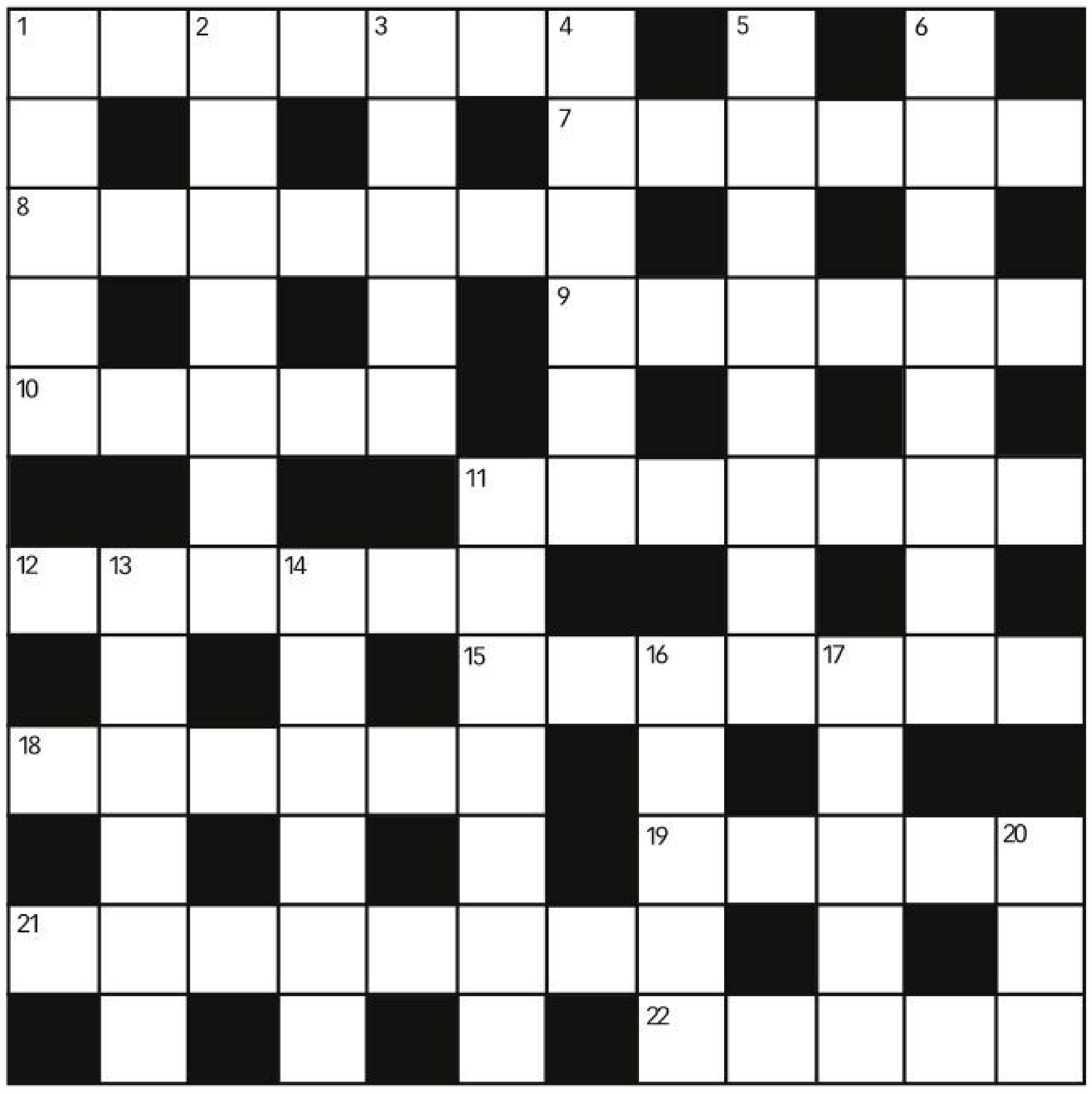
# Crossword

Put down your trowel, pick up a pen and exercise those brain muscles instead...



### ACROSS

**1** Sow hardy __ now for early flowers next summer (7)

**7** Check these orchard staples for signs of brown rot (6)

**8** Striking fuchsia whose variegated green and cream leaves have cerise veins (3,4)

**9** With its showy magenta blooms, *Nerine bowdenii* '__' is an autumn treat (6)

**10** Watch out for blackspot on these fragrant favourites (5)

**11** '__ Lady' is a heritage runner bean with a fine flavour (7)

**12** __ *maritima*, or sea kale (6)

**15** Force __ De Caen corms now for a vibrant indoor display in late winter (7)

**18** Fly __ is a fungus with distinctive spotted red caps (6)

**19** Join a shoot or bud of one plant to the stem of another (5)

**21** Bulbs of this native woodland treasure can be planted now (8)

**22** Plant name meaning tall, as in *Aralia* __ (5)

### DOWN

**1** This early autumn favourite with daisylike blooms needs regular watering (5)

**2** Genus of colourful bushy plants from South Africa (7)

**3** Trees famed for their rich autumn colour (5)

**4** *Lactuca* __ is the formal name for lettuce (6)

**5** This moss is ideal for lining hanging baskets (8)

**6** Striking member of the Daphne genus (8)

**11** Juicy fruits including 'Peregrine' and 'Rochester' varieties (7)

**13** King's lily and royal lily are apt names for *Lilium* __ (6)

**14** *Mirabilis jalapa* is better known as __ of Peru (6)

**16** The leaves of Rhododendron 'Golden __' turn yellow in autumn (5)

**17** Latin name meaning egg-shaped, as in *Crassula* __ (5)

**20** *Camellia sinensis* is the source of this popular cuppa (3)

**SOLUTIONS** to this crossword can be found in *Have your say* on p22

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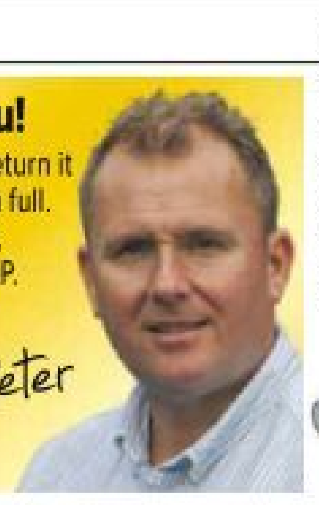

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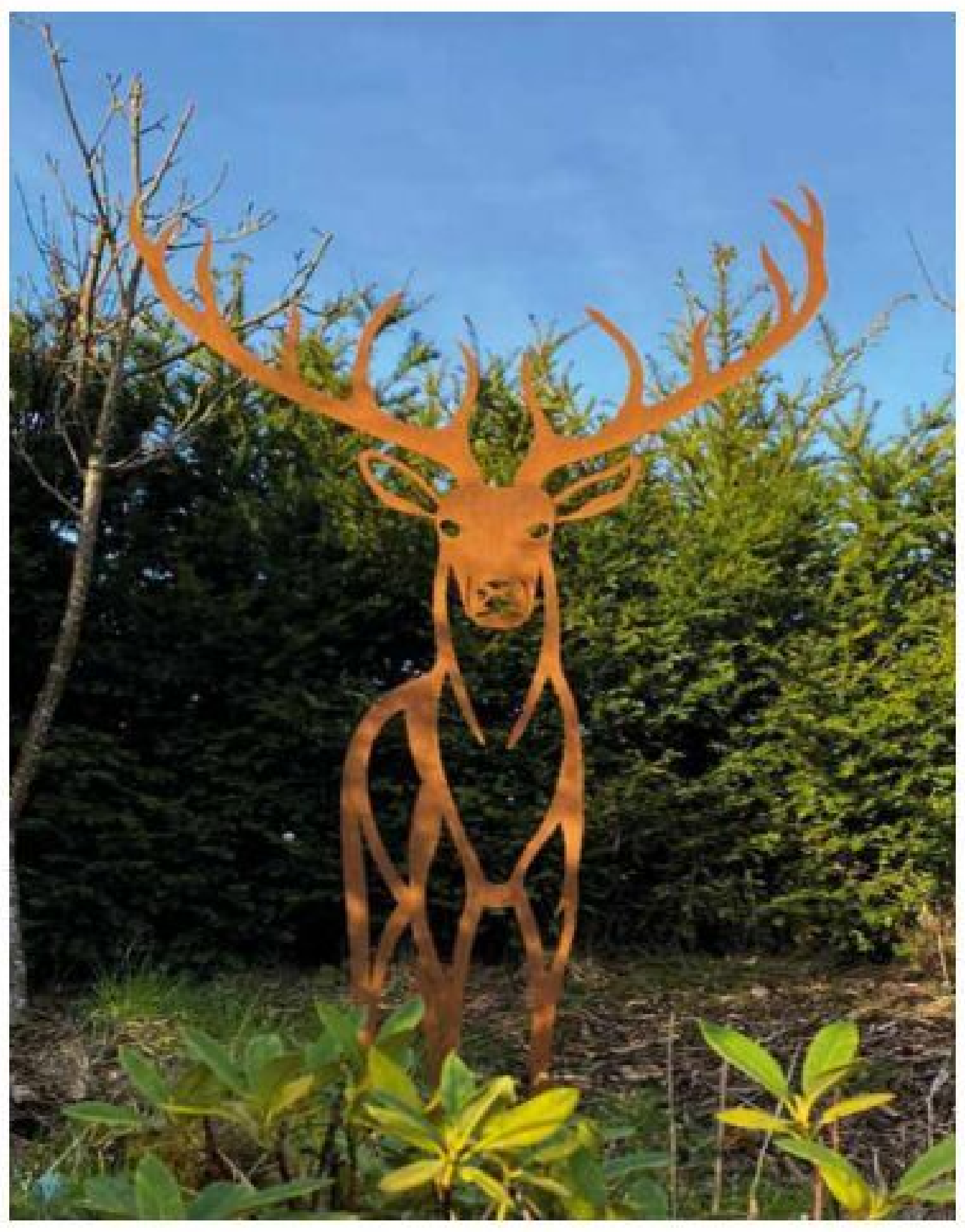

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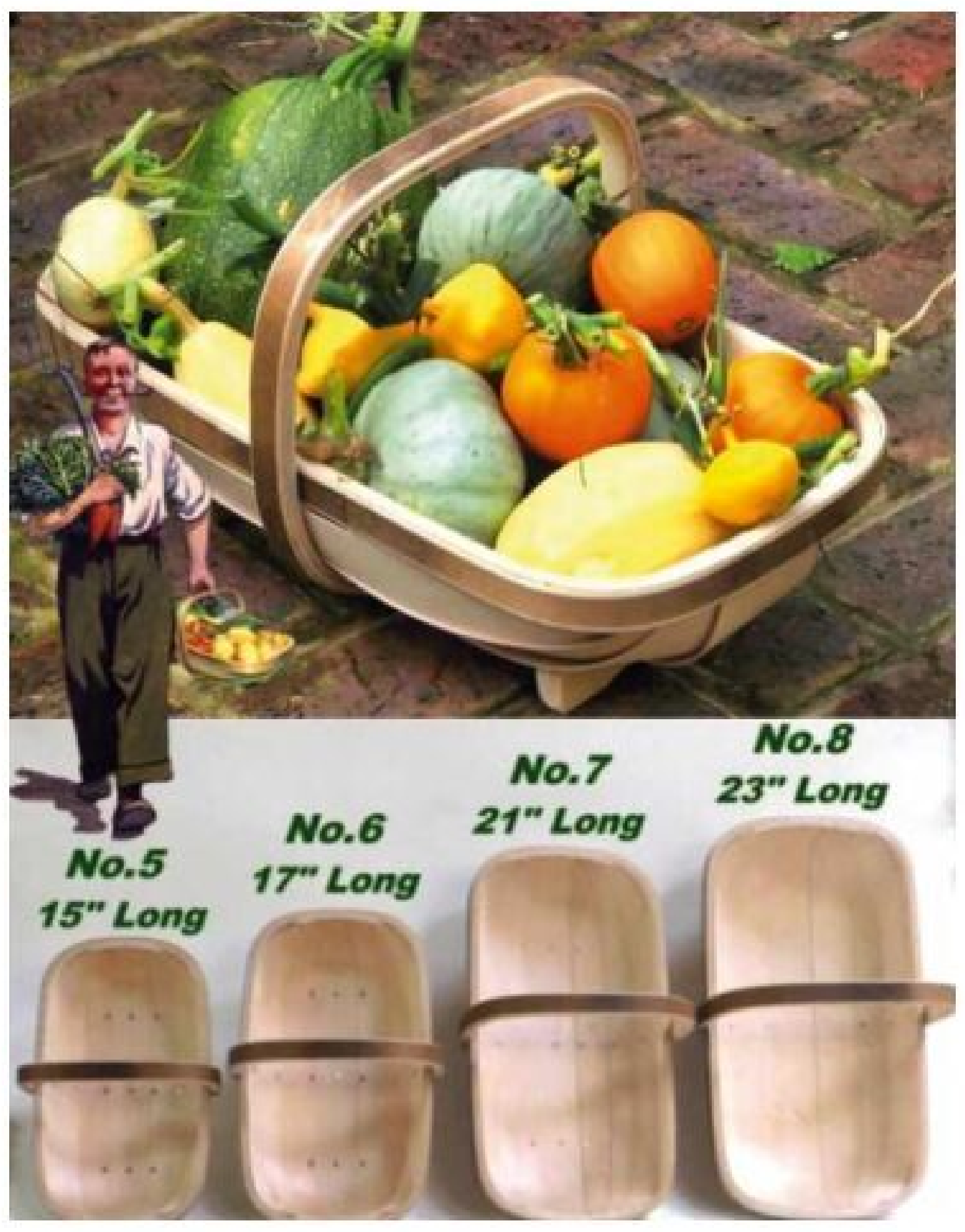

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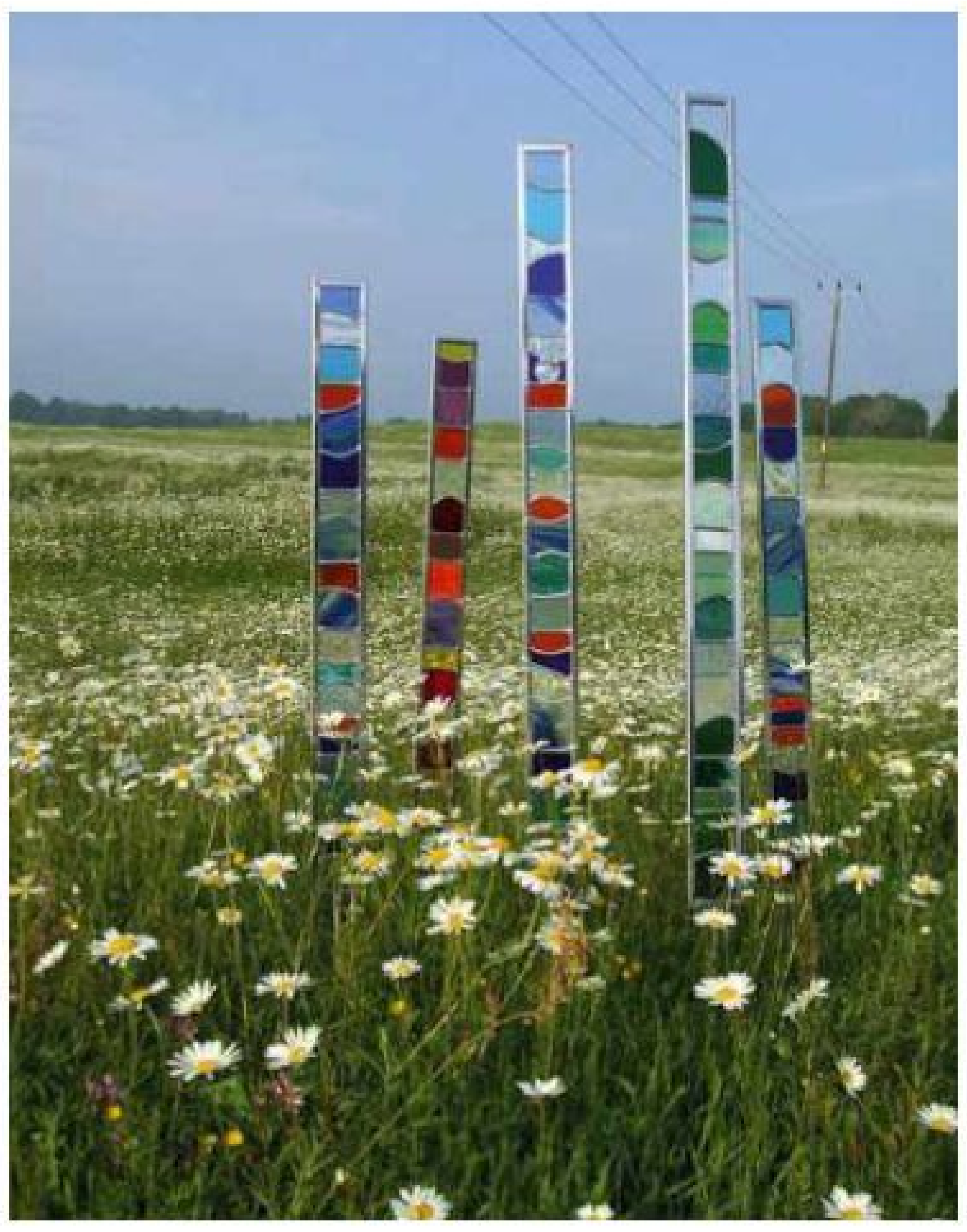

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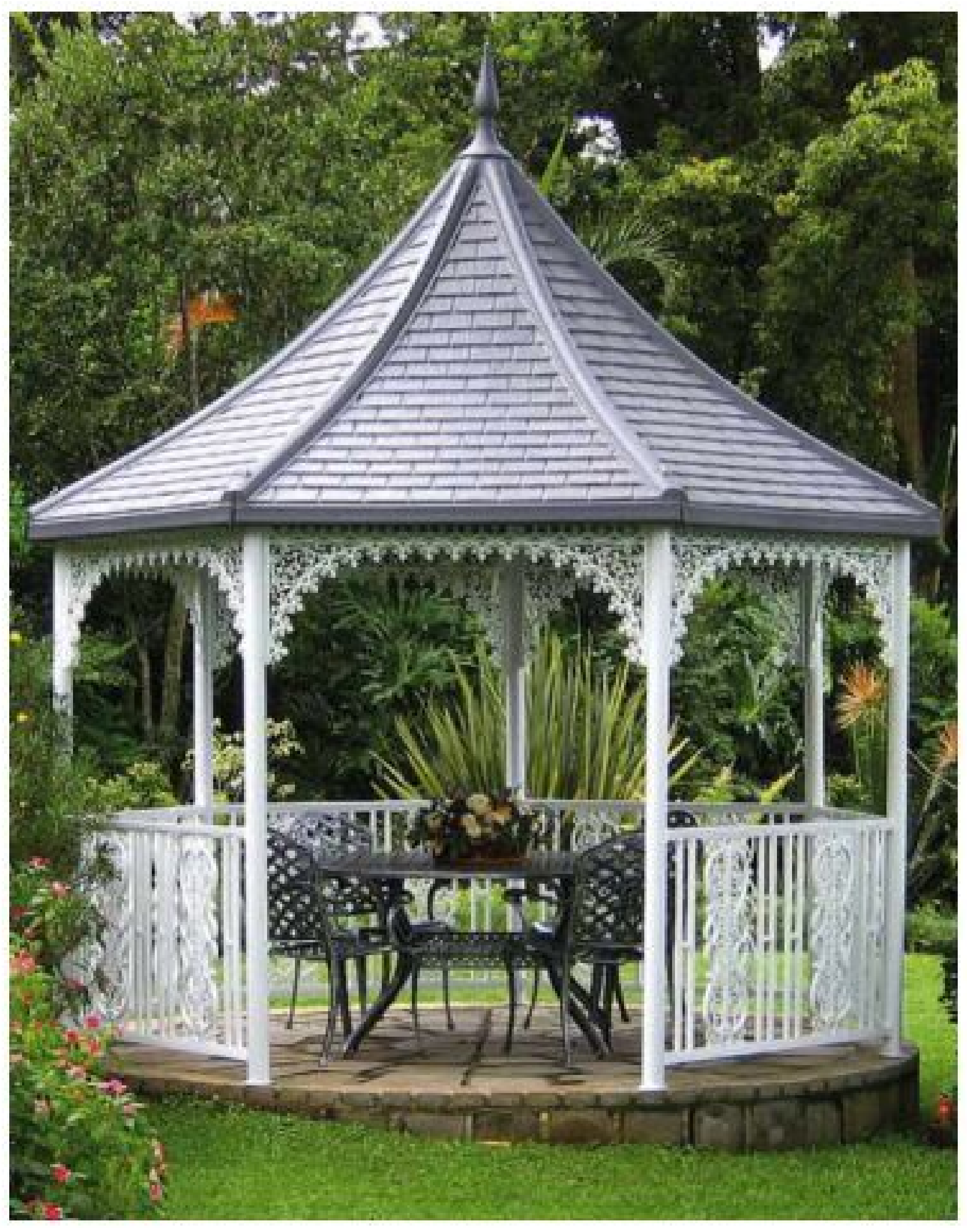

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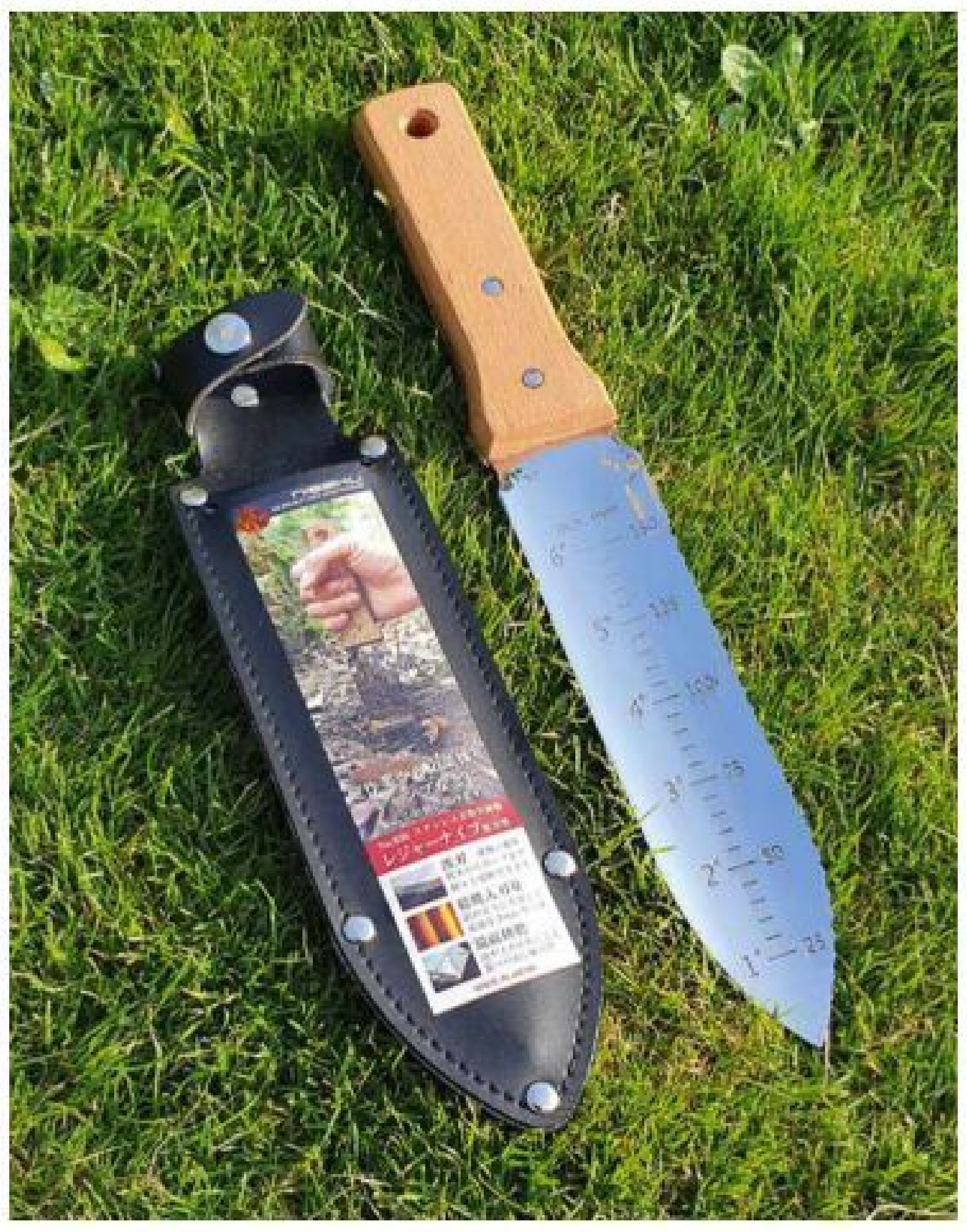

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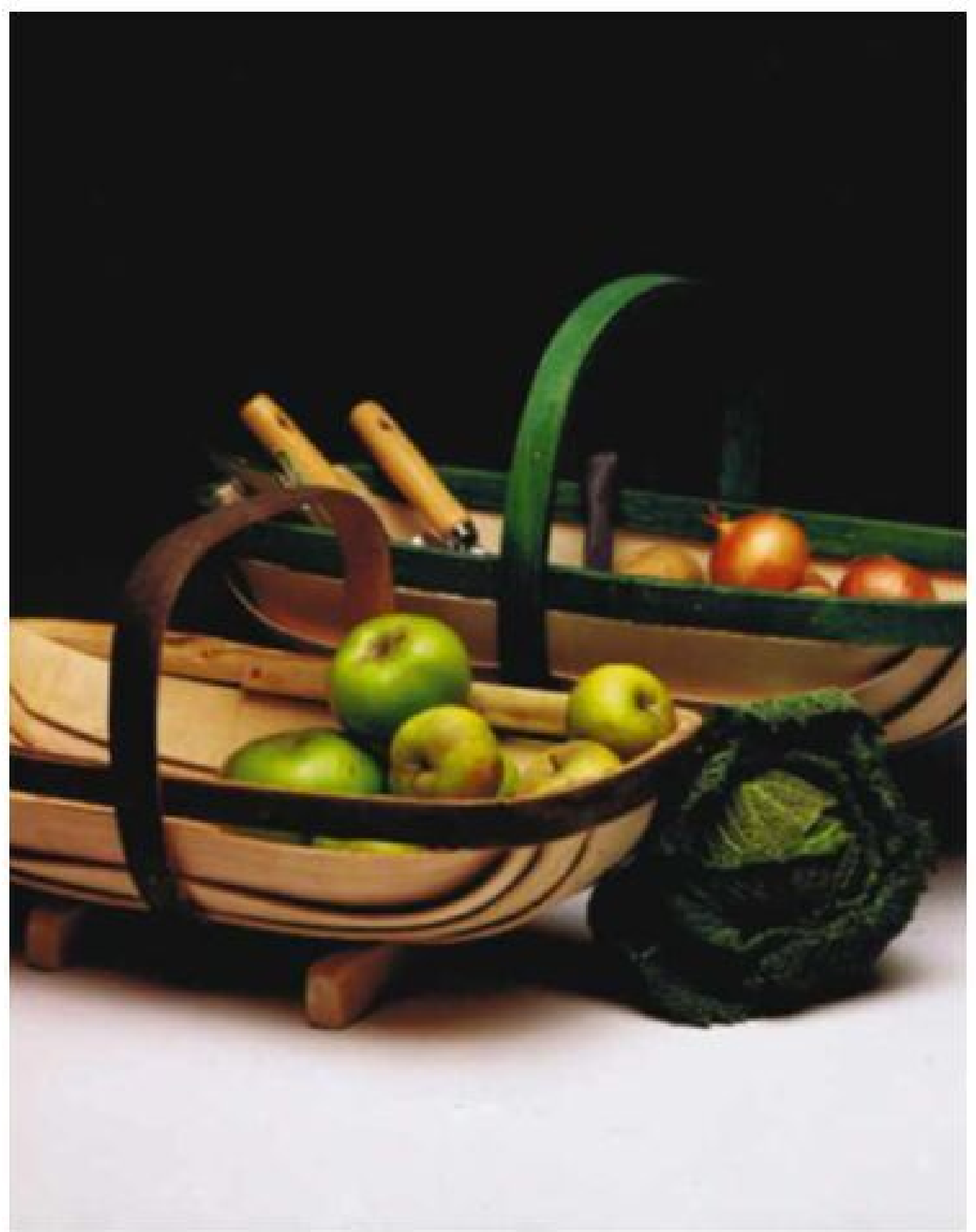

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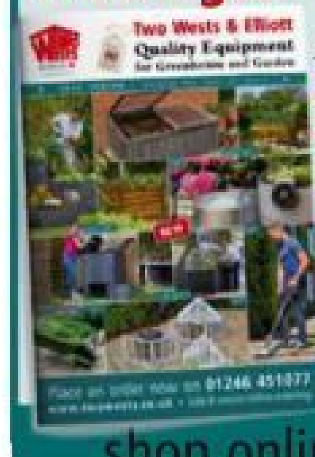

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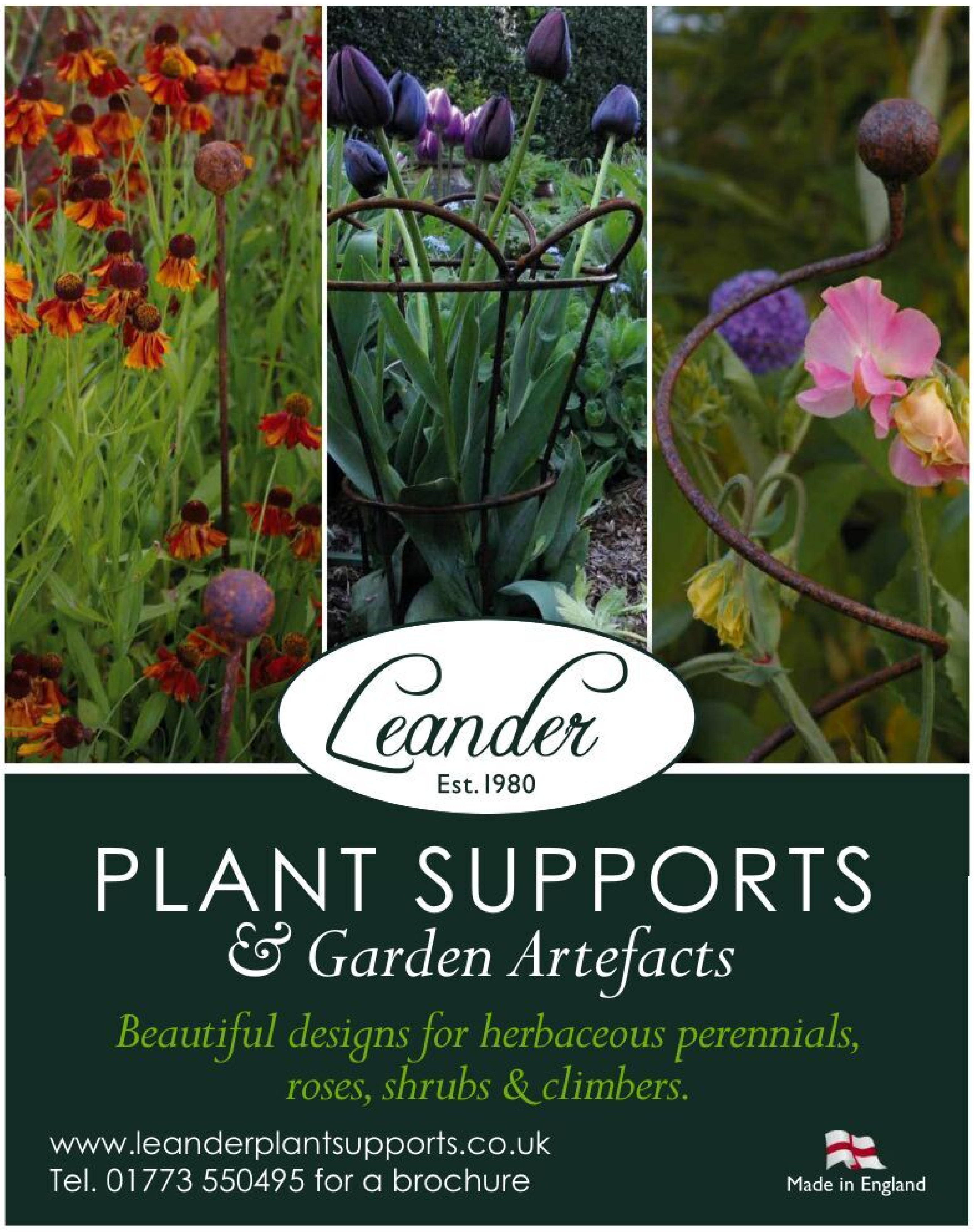
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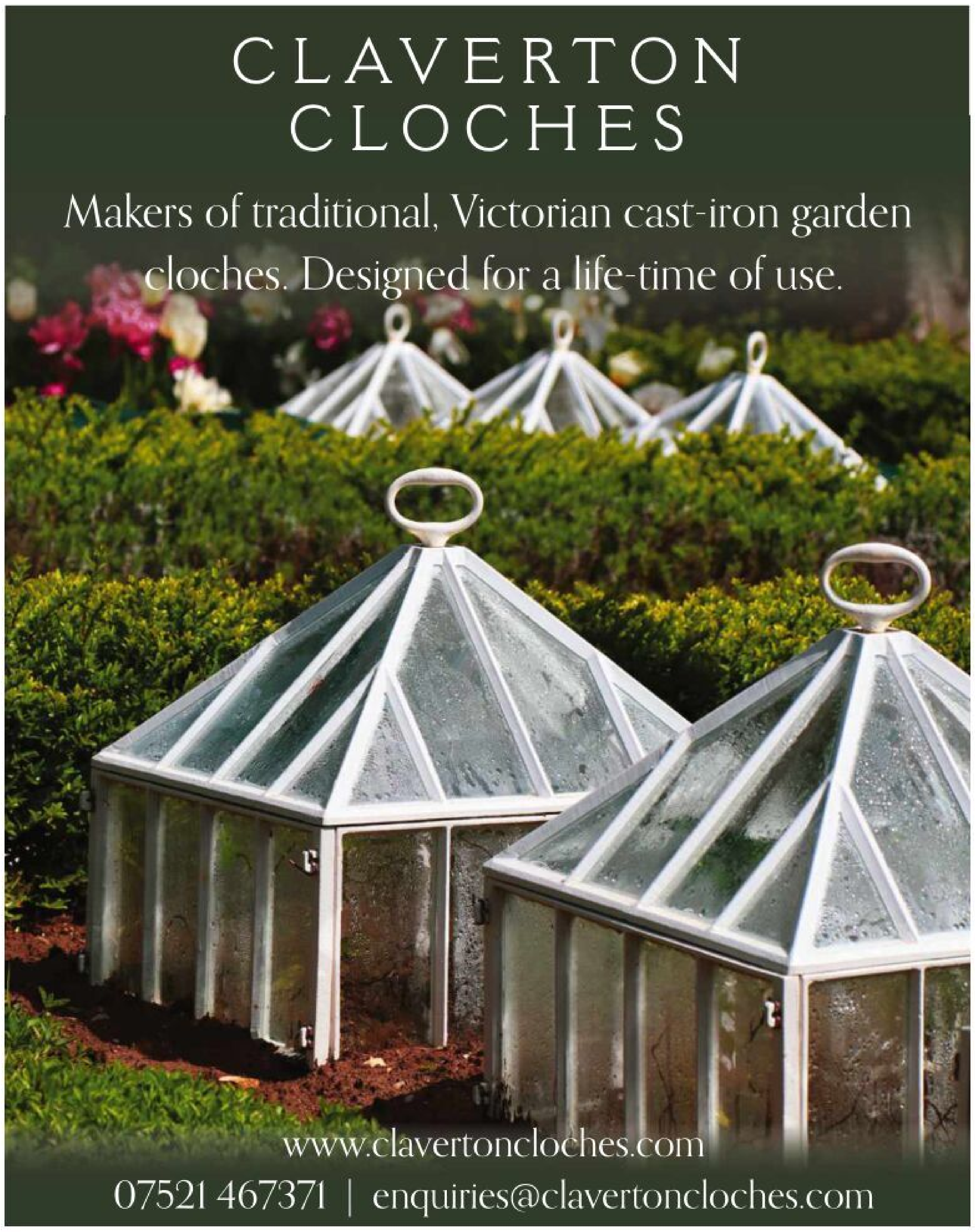
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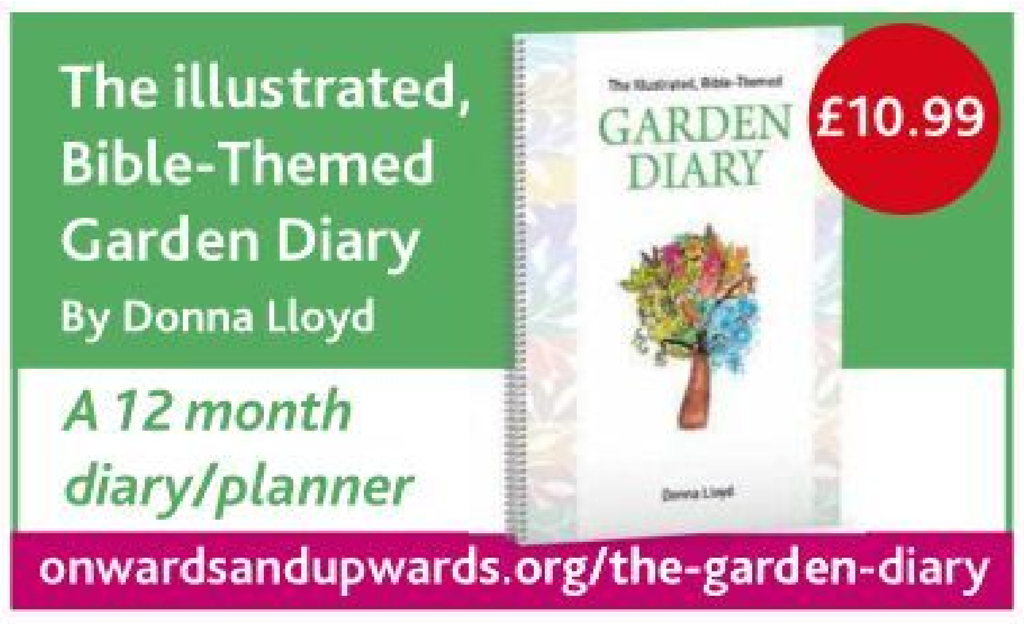
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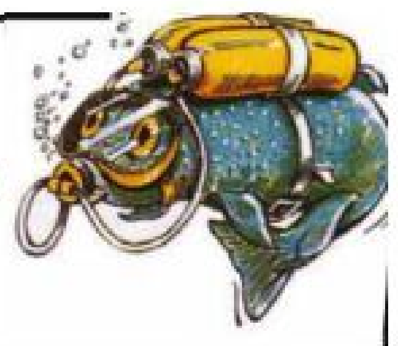

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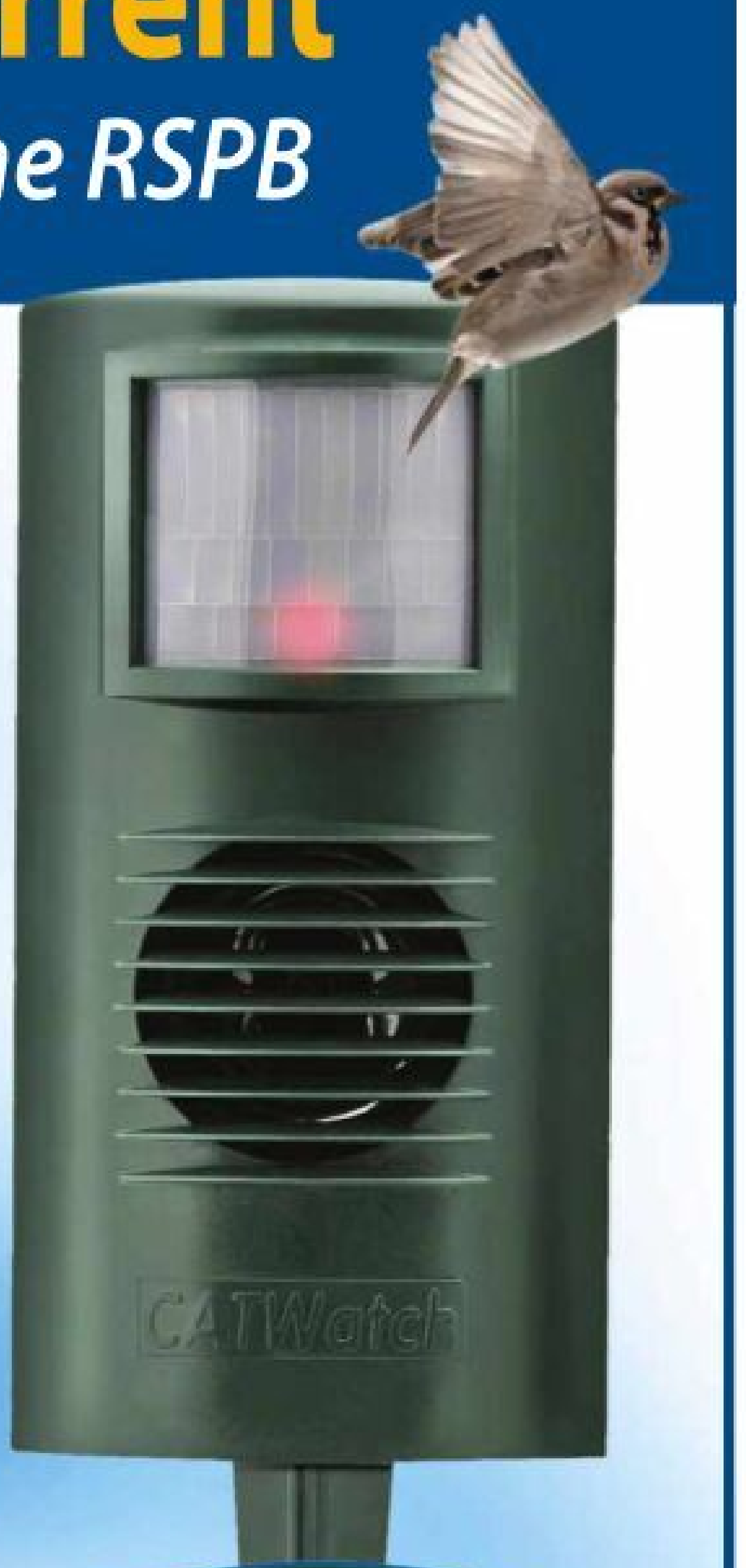

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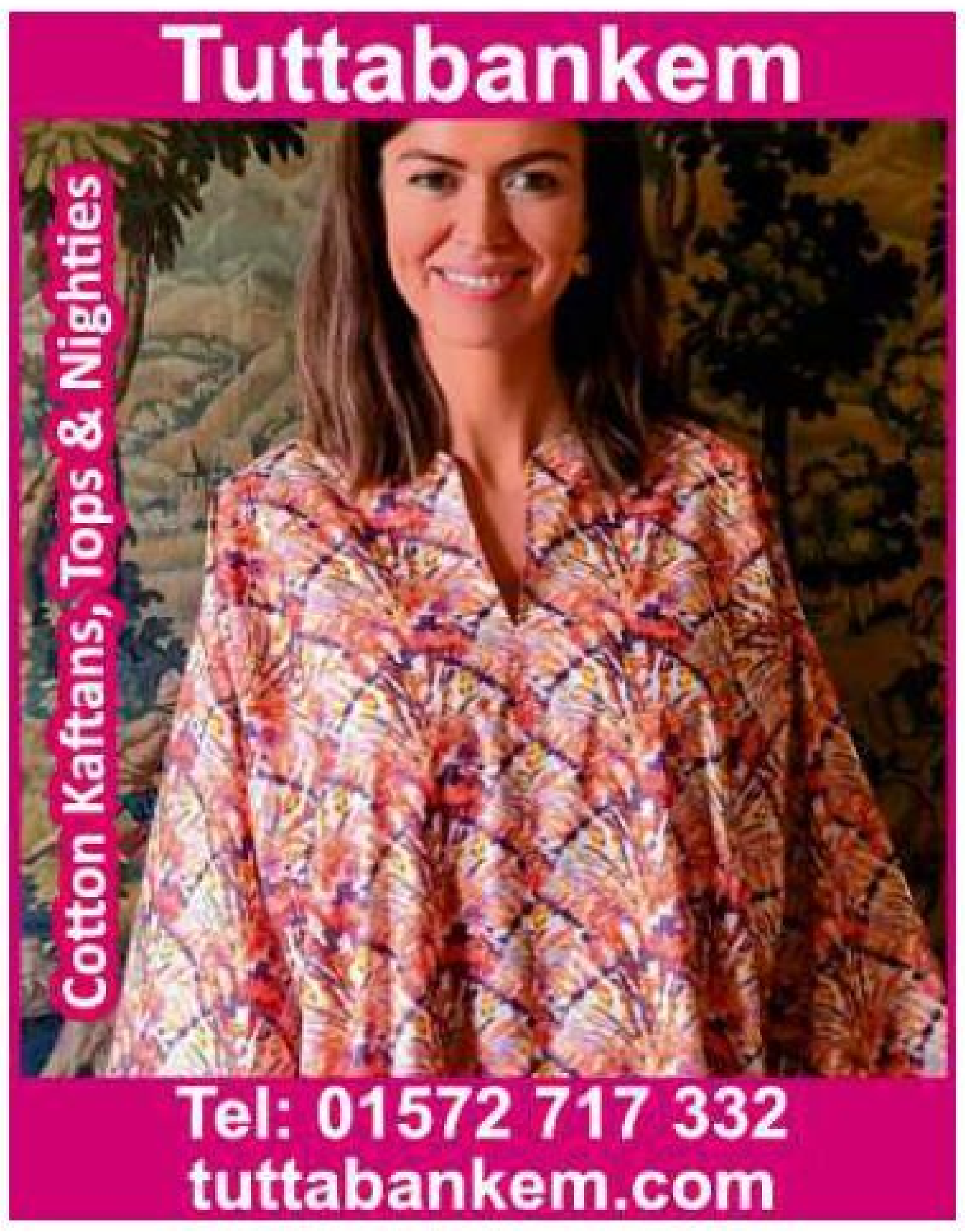

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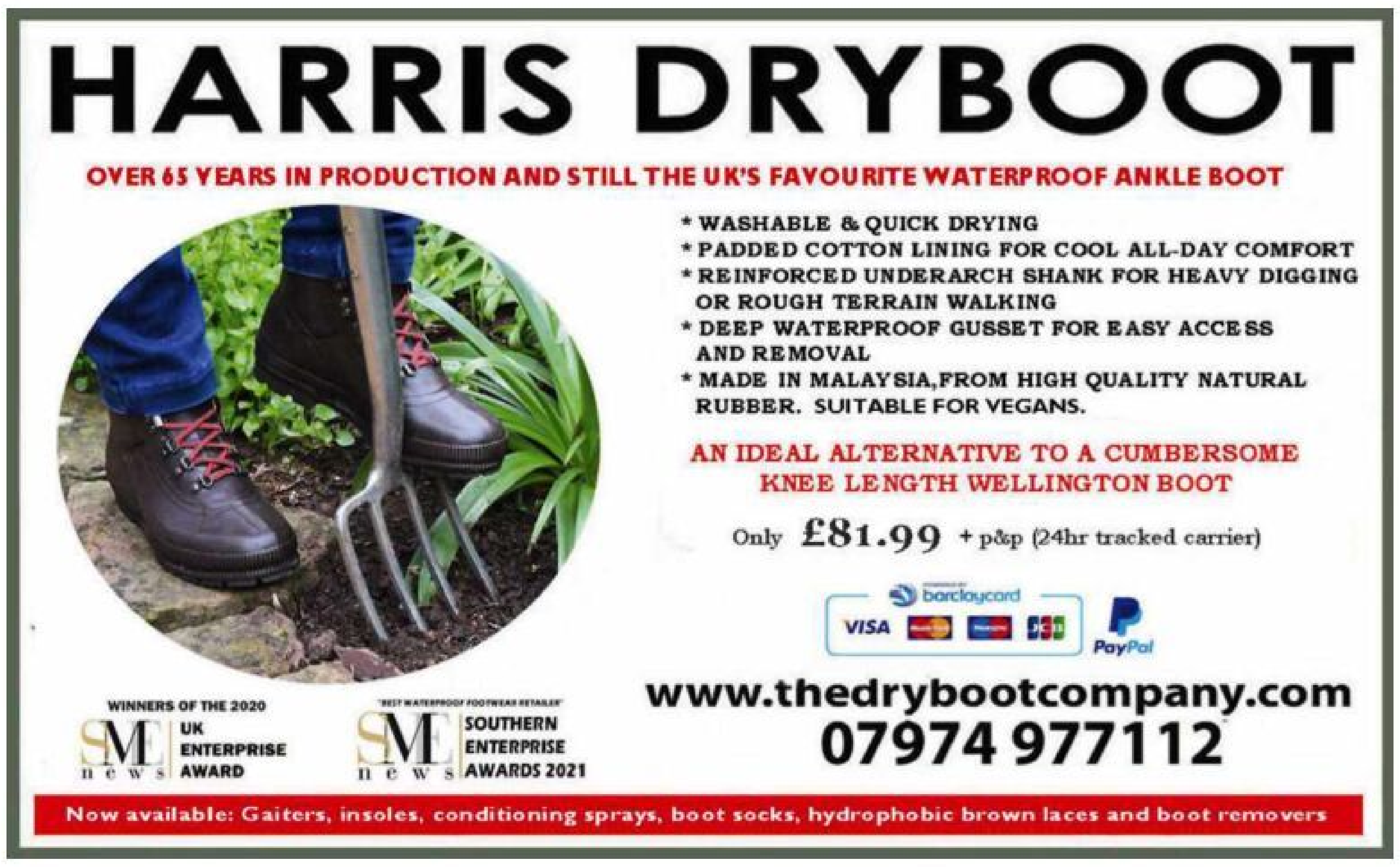

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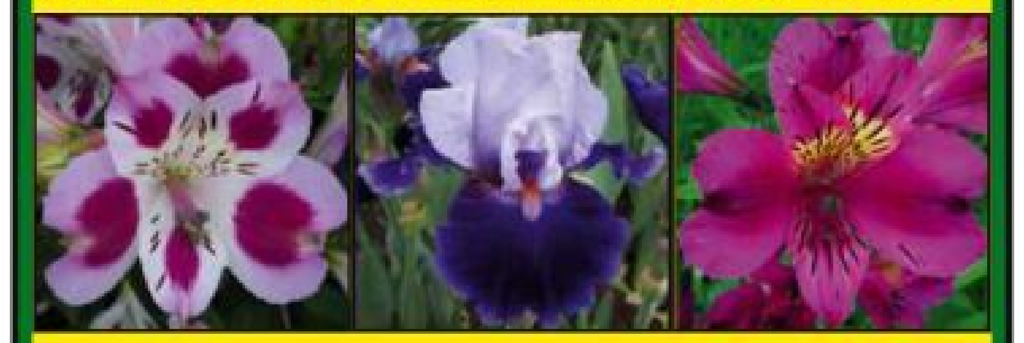

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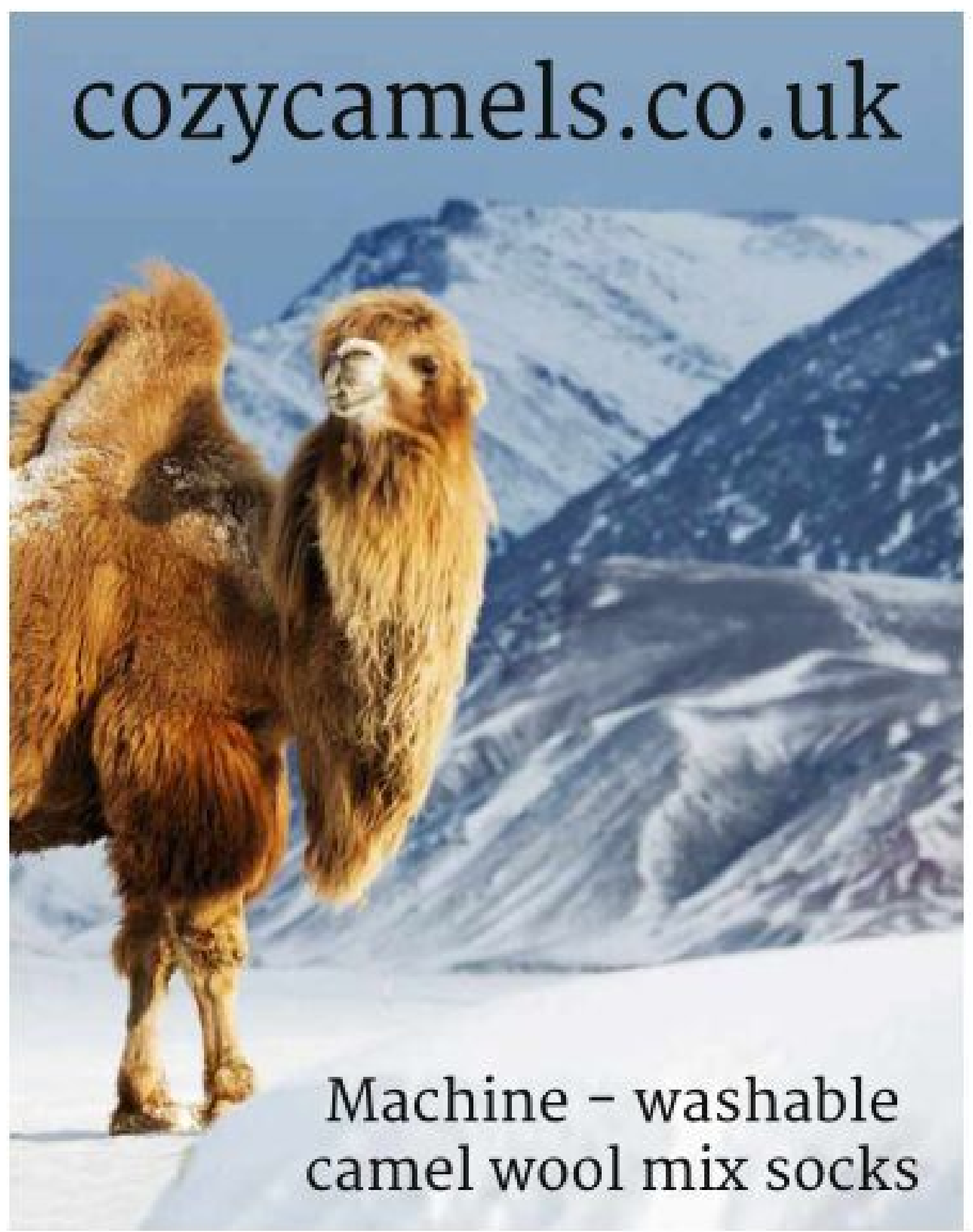

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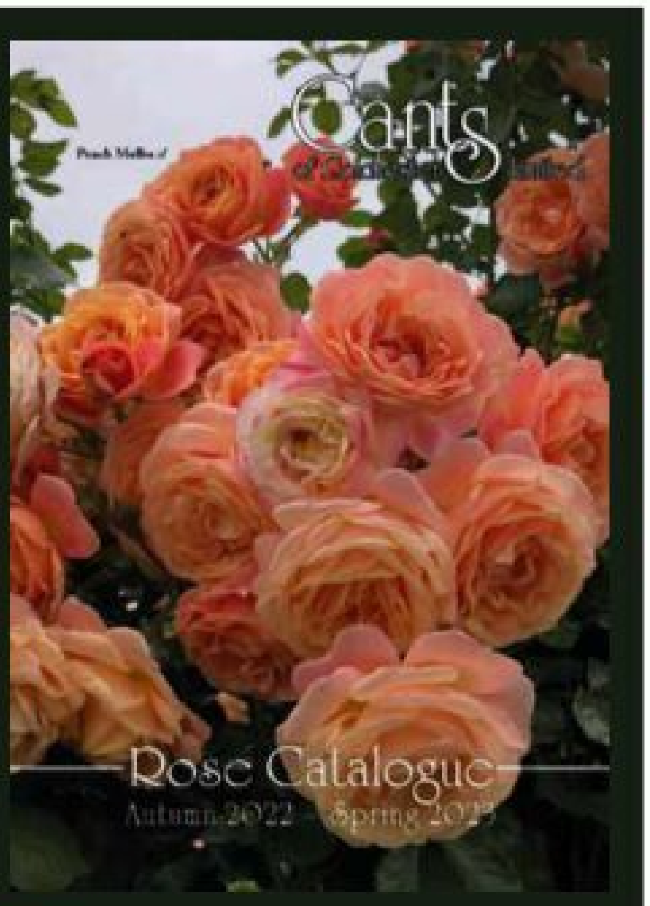

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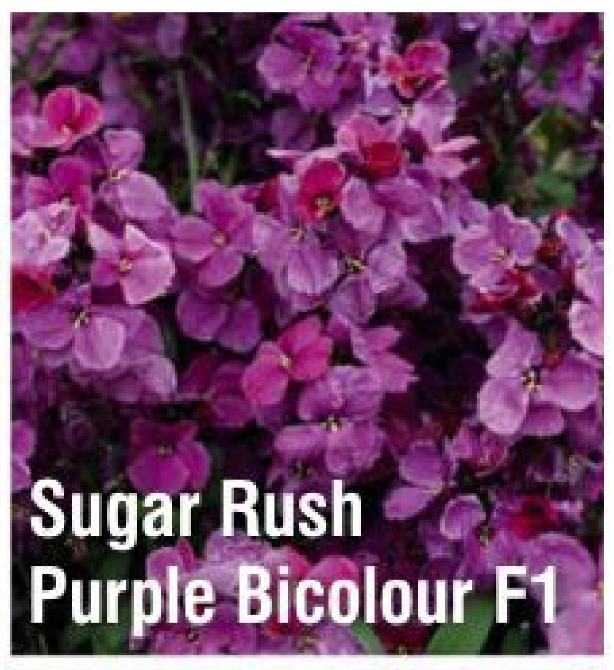
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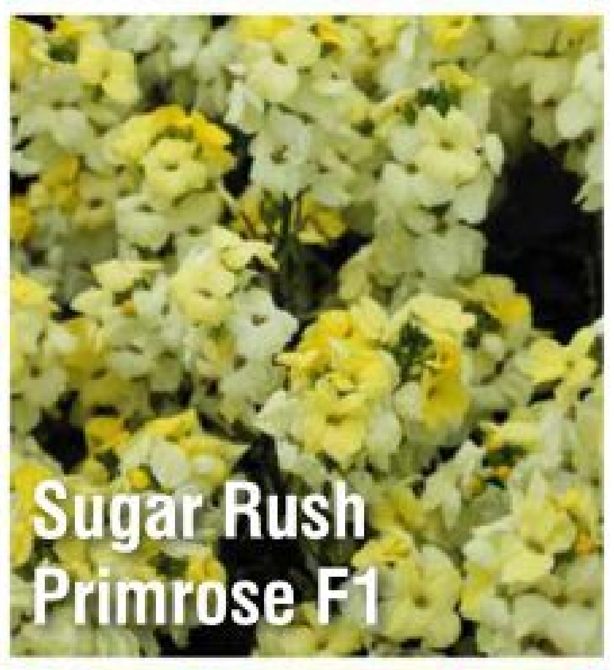
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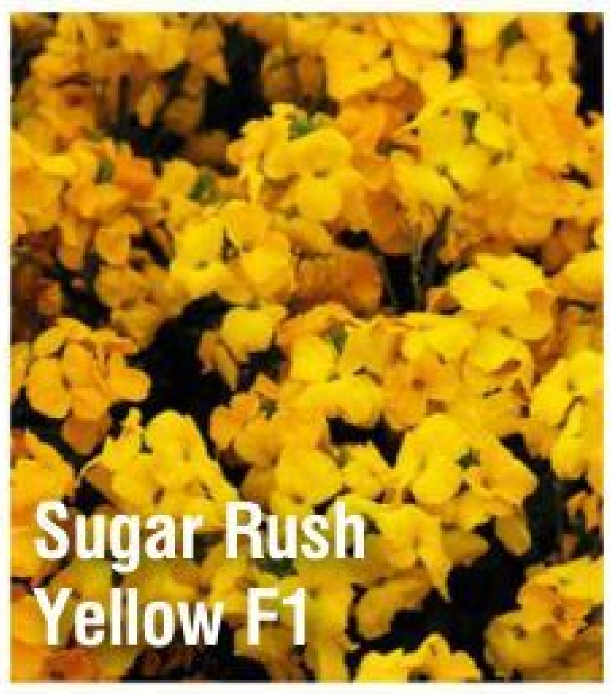
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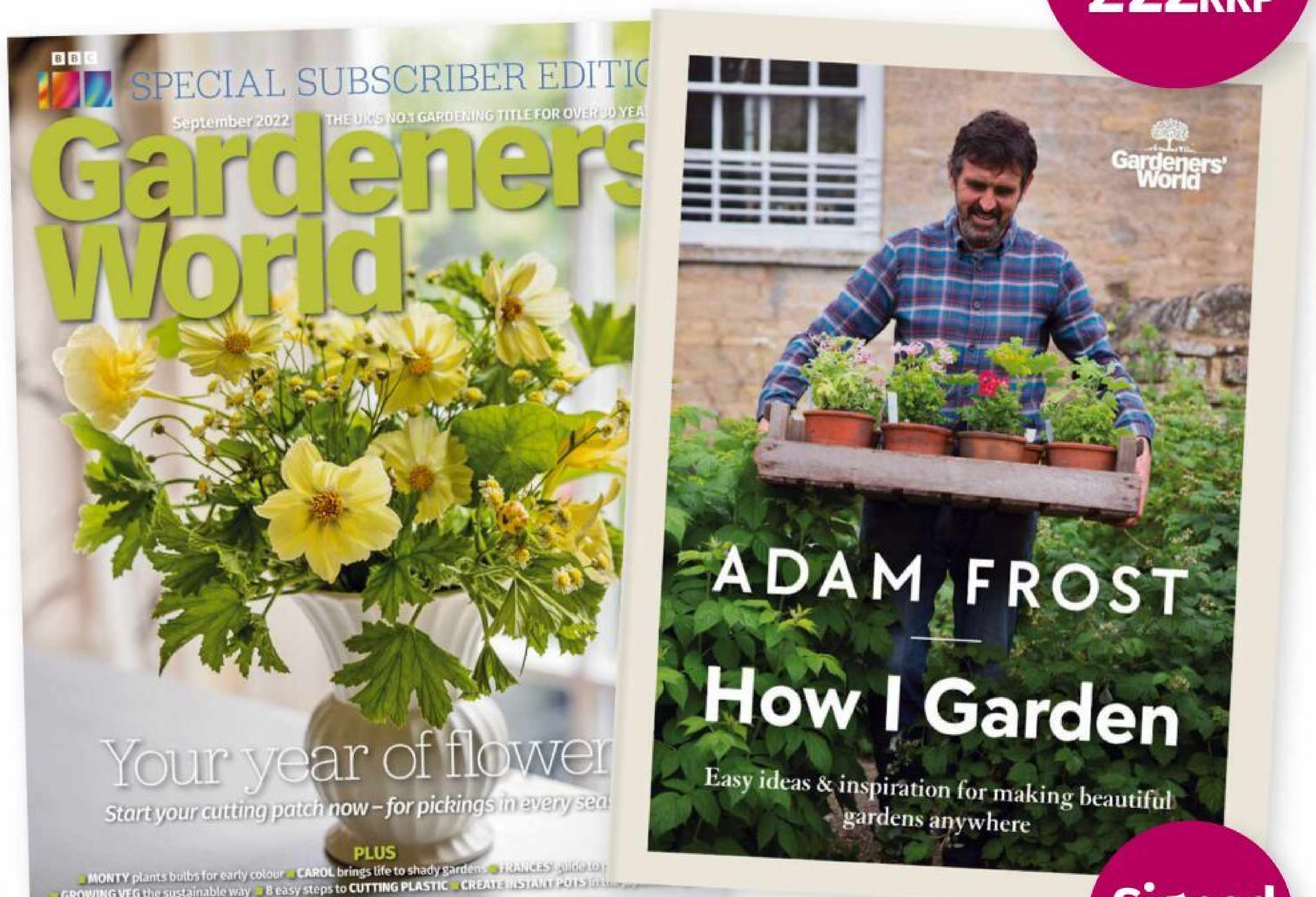
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# Tales from Titchmarsh

A day spent gardening is well worth celebrating, says **Alan**, whether that's with a glass of fizz, a bottle of beer or a cup of tea

**To talk of drink might be thought** of as being a touch personal. I mean, if one man's meat is another man's poison, and one man's fish is another man's *poisson*, who's to say whether tea is better than coffee or a herbal tisane is better for your continued health than a mug of Rosie Lee? One thing is certain: no gardener can function without recourse to a brew both morning and afternoon.

When I was growing up, the choice, courtesy of my mother's weekly trip to the grocer, was relatively straightforward: Brooke Bond Dividend Tea for breakfast, Nescafé mid-morning and back to the 'Divi' in the afternoon, though for a while my parents did ply me with Ovaltine at bedtime, whereas they were devotees of Horlicks. So sophisticated.

Nowadays it's Yorkshire Tea for breakfast, a mug of freshly ground coffee for elevenses and a cup of weak black lapsang in the afternoon. (In the evening the Ovaltine has been superseded by a large gin and tonic, but we'll pass over that... for now.)

> “At the end of the day comes the ultimate reward for a day's gardening: the popping of a cork or unscrewing of a cap to celebrate a job well done”

When I was apprenticed at the local nursery, Dick the tractor driver, having dropped off all the men at various flower beds around the town, would return to the nursery, collapse into his uncut moquette flea-ridden armchair in the mess room and partake of a pint pot of tea, so strong that it made his eyes water. The inside of that cracked receptacle remained as brown as his armchair, so tenacious was the tannin. But it did seem to fuel him. Half an hour later he'd set off in his tractor – gang mowers dangling behind him – to go round in circles for the rest of the morning on the playing fields down by the river.

I don't remember being quite so dependent on tea to see me through the morning, but then I was only 15 and two freshly made pork pies seemed to suit my rapid metabolic rate rather more than a pint of PG Tips. I blush now at the recollection, but would say, in my defence, that when I married some 11 years later I still weighed only eight and a half stone. Those were the days…

Today, of course, I am more discerning. The two pork pies have been replaced by a mug of freshly ground Columbian – not too weak, not too bitter, but strong enough to be the colour of plain chocolate when poured from the cafetière. My wife, on the other hand, is a devotee of decaffeinated Earl Grey tea. I know of others who prefer their morning libation to be of a delicate nature – a herbal tea bag, dunked for just long enough to give the boiling water a greenish tinge.

I will not be critical; merely incredulous that they find it sustaining enough to see them through until lunchtime. At weekends, having pottered in the flower beds all morning, there is an excuse to push the boat out a little further and have a bottle of beer for lunch. Just a small one. More than a swift half and there is a risk that I might snip off the end of my finger with the secateurs or push a fork through my foot.

But then at the end of the day comes the ultimate reward for a day's gardening: the popping of a cork or the flipping or unscrewing of a cap to celebrate a job well done. This is where the indecision comes in. Are we feeling like a beer or a glass of fizz? Red wine? White wine? Whispering Angel? Or a G and T? Should we demur on a Monday and just have a nice cup of tea? Deciding which variety of tomato to grow each year is child's play when compared with deciding on the evening tipple.

A friend who is an accomplished author and still writing in her 86th year was exhorted by her children to have at least one day a week free of alcohol. Her answer was unequivocal: “What on earth for?”

Yes, we are wise to the dangers, but then we also know that granny's dictum of 'everything in moderation' is a pretty good rule of thumb, and the pleasure that glass affords us at the end of the day and the relaxation it engenders must count for something. I say this to myself as I pour a large G and T in the evening. Just the one, you understand.

Alan.

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Vino
BEE
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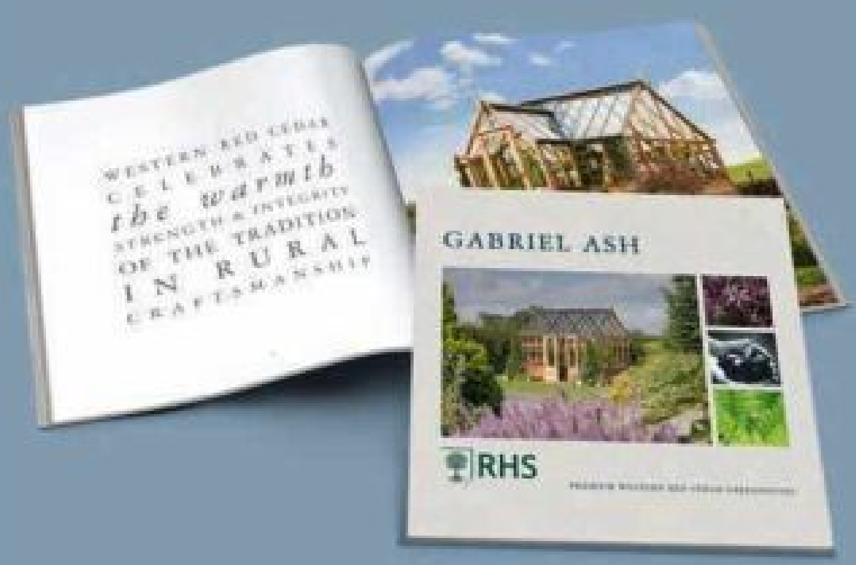

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